Does An MBA Help Women? : A Comparative Study Of The Career Progress And Labour Market Position Of Part Time Male And Female MBA Graduates

Thesis

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DOES AN MBA HELP WOMEN? A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CAREER PROGRESS AND LABOUR MARKET POSITION OF PART TIME MALE AND FEMALE MBA GRADUATES.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to assess the extent to which an MBA helps women and to ascertain whether significant barriers persist, despite their qualification, to their career development. It takes as its frame of reference the sex difference approach within liberal feminism, which argues that key differences between men and women explain their differential career progress, and the organisation- structure approach within radical feminism which emphasises the detrimental effects of structural features of the organisation and of power relations. To this effect a survey of 221 male and female MBA graduates was conducted. Results suggest that the extent to which an MBA helps women depends on the type of benefit in question. The MBA is beneficial to women in terms of intrinsic career factors such as credibility and confidence. The qualification also gives them higher personal status within the context of the formal organisation. However, men appear to benefit more than women in terms of extrinsic career factors such as pay and management level in that they progress further in their careers subsequent to the MBA. In terms of the sex difference approach, differences in individual characteristics between men and women were not found to be sufficiently strong to be able to explain their differential career progress. Instead women MBAs were found to experience hidden barriers relating to attitudes and culture and to be particularly disadvantaged within the informal organisational context. The thesis argues that the way these hidden barriers located within the informal context impact on women's progress within the formal organisation (the informal externality effect) explains their slower career progress subsequent to the MBA in relation to men. The level of disadvanatge within the formal context created by these hidden barriers are likely to be greater if the organisation is male dominated, if the gender imbalance occurs at senior levels and if women occupy traditionally female and non powerful roles.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: DOES AN MBA HELP WOMEN?

1.1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on woman managers who have an MBA qualification. It aims to provide both a critique and a development of existing theories on gender and work by assessing their applicability as explanatory frameworks to understanding the experiences of a particular type of woman manager namely those who hold a top management qualification, the MBA.

Research into women managers has amply indicated their disadvantaged position in the labour market relative to men and some of the barriers experienced that make up the so called "glass ceiling" (eg Morrison et al, 1987; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Powell & Butterfield, 1994). Women are less likely to reach senior management positions (Coe & Stark, 1991; Still, 1992; Davidson & Burke, 1994) and their salaries are generally lower even when they work at the same or similar levels (Davidson, 1991; Coe, 1992; Institute of Management, 1995). Barriers to career progression, in the form of attitudes and practices which are less conducive to women's progression, have been found to be prevalent in many organisations (eg Marshall, 1984; Howe & McRae, 1991; Ibarra, 1993; Maddock & Parkin, 1994). At the same time studies into the role of the MBA in career progression have suggested that, although its power

to project a manager up the corporate hierarchy may have diminished, it can still lead to higher status and pay levels and give the MBA holder a competitive edge over his or her non MBA counterpart (AMBA, 1995).

This may go some way to explain the steady growth in the popularity of the MBA over the last 10 years. Between 1978 and 1993 the number of MBA graduates from British business schools rose from 18,500 to 30,000. In 1980 approximately 1,100 students successfully gained their MBA qualification. In 1994 the equivalent figure was nearly 4,000 and the most recent estimate (for 1996) is 8,000 (AMBA, 1995, 1997). Most university business schools now have some form of MBA provision and it is generally recognised that, as a qualification aimed at senior and middle management levels, the MBA is an important part of any management development programme.

However, although women now form from one fifth to one quarter of MBA students (AMBA, 1995), little systematic research has been conducted in the UK into women MBA graduates. Very little is known about their position in the labour market and how this compares with men. Work in this field has tended to concentrate on the position of women managers generally, irrespective of MBA status, or on MBA graduates generally with little or no breakdown between the sexes. Without that breakdown, it is difficult to judge how successful the MBA is for women and how their career progress compares with men subsequent to their gaining the qualification.

The title "Does an MBA help women?" therefore focuses on the issue of success, both in terms of career progress subsequent to graduation from an MBA course and

in terms of evaluating the power of the qualification to assist women to overcome career barriers that make up the 'glass ceiling'. The overall aims of the research project are as follows:

TO ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH AN MBA HELPS WOMEN IN THEIR CAREERS

and

TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS PERSIST TO THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT.

Accordingly, this thesis hopes to fill a current 'research gap' by comparing the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates as well as the nature of barriers experienced. At the same time by focusing on MBAs as a special type of manager, existing theories of gender and work can be critiqued and developed. This will be done by assessing the applicability of the sex difference approach within the liberal feminist tradition to women MBAs and career progress. The emphasis here is on the need for individual women to overcome career barriers by enhancing their marketability through gaining such assets as an MBA qualification. On this basis, by providing such an enhancement, it may be predicted that the MBA will be instrumental in helping women overcome career barriers. This will be contrasted with the organisation structure approach from within the radical feminist tradition which locates career barriers in organisational structures and in patriarchal power relations that follow women into the organisation so that, irrespective of individual characteristics and qualifications, they will be less successful in their climb up the corporate hierarchy than men.

1.2 Research Propositions

This debate, from within the differing perspectives in women in management literature and feminist theory, informs the current research question: Does an MBA help women? It also informs the related issue of career barriers and the extent to which these persist despite the MBA qualification. Consequently, the debate leads to the following research propositions which have arisen from the above theoretical traditions as well as from existing empirical work:

Proposition 1

The MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men

Proposition 2

Despite the MBA women managers face barriers to career progression that are located within the organisation, its structures and processes.

By testing these propositions, this research will also be testing the relative strengths and validity of the sex difference approach within liberal feminist theory and the organisation structure perspective within radical feminist theory in an attempt to explain the labour market position of women MBAs.

1.3 Women in Management Literature

1.3.1 How the field has developed

While including in its frame of reference an analysis of such factors as the role of qualifications and the impact of career barriers on career development, women in management literature is a highly diverse area. It incorporates a variety of strands and disciplines - sociological, economic, organisation and feminist theories; analyses of gendered power relations and processes; and critical research on men and masculinities. Underlying frameworks and academic influences are therefore disparate and each one, according to Marshall (1995) is developing rapidly in relation to gender and management. The field is therefore not a coherent one and the researcher has to pick a way through diverse perspectives in choosing a framework for analysis.

The development of ideas and assumptions on job segregation has followed a three stage path which is also reflected in the women in management literature. Firstly, early work on organisations and industrial relations, such as the Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1949) was largely based on an assumption that workers were male (Mills, 1988; Burrell & Hearn, 1989). Much of the literature on management was also grounded in this assumption with women relegated to a footnote if mentioned at all (Mills, 1988; Acker, 1990; Ledwith & Colgan, 1996). Secondly, from this 'gender blind' model literature moved to a feminist critique which treated women as a special case. In management theory, this developed into the 'sex difference' approach (Fagenson, 1990) which viewed women as having different qualities from men in

term of personality traits and leadership styles with these traits acting as a potential disadvantage to women in managerial positions (Horner, 1970; McClelland 1975; Putnam & Heinen 1976). This approach is grounded in the liberal feminist perspective which emphasises the need for equal opportunities and the creation of a level playing field on the one hand and for women to develop marketable skills and attributes on the other. Finally, the literature has moved more recently to an approach which sees the organisation itself as gendered so that women's experiences in the workplace need to be analysed in the context of gendered power relations (Walby, 1988; Cockburn, 1991). In management this has led to work which locates disadvantages experienced by women managers in organisational structures, cultures and processes (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Acker, 1990; Cockburn, 1991). This is grounded in the radical feminist tradition with its emphasis on patriarchy and relations of domination and subordination.

1.3.2 A Framework of Perspectives: Fagenson's Typology

The diversity of approaches in women in management literature referred to earlier makes the "packaging" of different perspectives into broad themes or approaches a difficult one. This has not been facilitated by a tendency for research on women in management to be atheoretical, descriptive and heavily reliant on the sex difference model (Green and Cassell, 1996). One attempt at such a typology (Fagenson, 1990) groups existing perspectives into three types. The 'gender centred perspective', akin to the sex difference approach referred to above, argues from a liberal feminist base that women's lack of representation in senior management is attributable to factors internal to women and that the development of further attributes and skills will

enhance their position in management. Secondly, from a more structuralist perspective and drawing partly from radical feminism, the 'organisation- structure' perspective emphasises the organisational structures within which women work. Kanter (1977) for example refers to the power and dynamics of numbers in organisations so that women working in 'skewed' groups, where they are very much in the minority, suffer the disadvantage of visibility, marginalisation and lack of access to power structures. More recent work, following up the issue of 'tokenism', has found these same dynamics to be important in affecting women's progress up the modern organisational hierarchy (Marshall, 1984, 1992; Ely, 1994). Thirdly, the gender-organisation-system approach builds on the previous two perspectives to include wider contextual processes of "societal inequities" which filter into organisational culture and expectations.

A more recent development in women in management literature, which falls somewhere between the organisation structure and the gender-organisation-system approach, and which also has its roots in radical feminism, has been the recognition that organisations themselves are gendered so that women's experiences in the workplace needs to be analysed in the context of gendered power relations referred to earlier (Walby, 1988; Cockburn, 1991). In management this has led to work which locates the disadvantage experienced by women managers in organisational cultures and processes (Marshall, 1984; Acker, 1990; Cockburn, 1991). Hidden barriers embedded within a 'corporate patriarchy' (a system of male power which operates at the organisational level) manifests in attitudes and practices which exclude and marginalise women from key areas of decision making (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Coe,1992; Marshall, 1992; Ibarra, 1993). While corporate patriarchy may take

diverse forms in terms of organisational culture - from polite paternalism to oppressive bullying - it serves to disable women in their climb up the corporate hierarchy. One hidden barrier embedded in the cultural values of the organisation is the so called 'men's club' whereby men collude informally and/or tacitly to exclude and marginalise women. Failure to achieve membership or to take part in these informal networks is a severe disadvantage, cutting many women off from significant aspects of organisational life. Information sharing, gaining feedback, assessing colleagues and establishing relations are all functions of the informal structure and are crucial in understanding and acting within the politics of the organisation (Marshall, 1992; Ibarra, 1992). Gender power relations can therefore be partly centred around access to these informal structures and can be seen as an active process of power dynamics which is reproduced daily in everyday work situations to the disadvantage of women (Acker,1992; Davies, 1995).

1.3.3 Relating the typology to the research question: Does an MBA help women

This research affirms the importance of including the significance of gendered power relations and of these "hidden barriers" into a framework of analysis. These elements, as Marshall (1992) and Ibarra (1992) suggest, are part of the organisation's (informal) structure. While early work within the organisation-structure perspective failed to fully develop an analysis of gendered power and of corporate patriarchy, these more recent developments conform with their overall approach both of which have as their foundations radical feminist theory. On this basis, it is argued that this more recent emphasis on "hidden barriers" and gendered power relations can be incorporated into a broader organisation-structure perspective as a framework of

analysis.

In terms of Fagenson's typology, while methodological problems with the gender-organisation-system approach limit its usefulness as a framework for inquiry (specifically the problems of incorporating the 'systems' element into a research project), important issues are raised over the competing perspectives and assumptions inherent in the sex difference and in the organisation- structure approach. These issues relate not only to the career progress of women managers generally but also more specifically to the question of the role of the MBA in subsequent career development.

The sex difference approach within the liberal feminist perspective would argue that gaining more qualifications and skills in the form, for example, of an MBA would enhance individual attributes and facilitate the climb up the corporate hierarchy. On this basis one would expect women to reap the rewards of their efforts and to find that an MBA does help them in furthering their careers in the management sector. According to Burke and McKeen (1994) pursuit of a higher level qualification to enhance marketability and overcome career barriers is a common strategy for women. Such a strategy may also go some way to overcome another perceived problem namely the tendency for women to bring to the labour market a background in 'soft' subjects such as Arts and Humanities as opposed to 'hard' subjects like science or engineering which are more favoured by men. If, as Chapman (1989) suggests, this limits their subsequent career progress, then the acquisition of a high level management qualification such as the MBA may help to eradicate such disadvantage. As the highest management qualification which is free standing in the sense that it

does not 'bolt' onto previous study, the MBA may act as an "academic equaliser" and provide a springboard of equal strength for both men and women irrespective of the nature or type of first degree. Melamed (1996), in her model of career development, goes further than this and suggests that a qualification such as an MBA may help women in their careers more than men. This is because the qualification has greater value for women in that it serves to enhance their credibility which may have otherwise been reduced by negative attitudes and stereotypes attached to their gender. They therefore need to display higher levels of skill and possess higher levels of qualification than men in order to succeed as compensation for the disadvantage of being female. The qualification has a lower value for men, on the other hand, firstly because their gender has already awarded them heightened credibility and secondly because they can rely on other assets such as access to informal networks to progress (Melamed, 1996). On this basis it may be the case that the MBA is more favourable for women in terms of career advancement than for men.

This optimism would not be shared by the organisation- structure approach which would argue that despite heightened attributes through the acquisition of the MBA organisational structures and processes create career barriers which individual women find hard to break through. The numerical distribution of women in senior management, for example, may serve to marginalise 'token' women from both power structures and informal networks, and help to create a culture of exclusion in which women do not thrive. If the main problems women face lie within the organisation, its culture and its practices then the MBA is unlikely to be a powerful tool in helping individual women to overcome the more 'hidden' barriers embedded within a corporate patriarchy. On this basis one might expect to find that the MBA does not

help women, or more specifically, that it does not help women as much as men.

1.4 Research Objectives

It is against this background that the two propositions outlined in section 1.3 were developed. Both these propositions relate to the strength of the MBA qualification in furthering women's careers and in helping them overcome career barriers. In order to test and elaborate on these propositions, this research will pursue the following objectives:

Objective 1

To examine the respective profiles of male and female MBA graduates in terms of personal characteristics (eg age, marital status, parenthood, education background) and career characteristics (eg management function, management role, pay, career path, organisational sector and organisational activity) in order to ascertain key differences between the two samples.

This relates to proposition one which tests the liberal feminist and sex difference approach to career development. This is based on the idea that there are differences in profile and attributes between men and women and between male and female managers. Research grounded in this approach suggests some differences in the profile of male and female managers in that women tend to be younger, lower paid, and to occupy both lower levels of management and a narrower range of functions than men (Rycroft, 1989; Davidson,1991; Coe, 1992; IM 1995). In addition, they are

more highly educated than their male counterparts though their background is likely to be in Arts or Humanities (Scase and Goffee, 1989; Coe 1992) and they are concentrated in the public sector and services (Rycroft, 1989; Coe, 1992; IM, 1995). They are more likely to be single or divorced and are less likely to have children (Davidson, 1991; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Coe, 1992). Accordingly, a comparison of the profiles of male and female MBA graduates forms an important preliminary stage of this study.

Objective 2

To examine the respective profiles of female MBAs and women managers generally in terms of personal and career characteristics (see above) in order to ascertain what, if any, key differences there are between the two.

A second objective is to ascertain whether and to what extent key differences exist between the profile of women managers generally and women MBAs. This will draw on work by Coe (1992) in particular, and by Davidson (1991) and Davidson and Cooper (1992). As most research in this area has concentrated on women managers irrespective of their MBA status and as this research project focuses entirely on MBAs, it is important to assess what differences, if any, there are between the two groups. This will enable the researcher to assess the extent to which current women in management literature can reliably inform an understanding of the position of women MBAs.

Objective 3

To examine the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates before and after acquiring the qualification in order to assess the differential impact of an MBA on men and women and to establish the extent to which an MBA helps women.

This also relates to proposition one and will help establish whether, as the sex difference and liberal feminist perspective suggests, enhanced attributes such as the acquisition of an MBA will facilitate career progress. It will also help to establish the validity of Melamed's proposition, namely that qualification levels are likely to have a greater impact on women than on men.

Objective 4

To explore the nature of career barriers experienced by women MBA graduates and the impact those barriers have on their career progress.

This relates to proposition two, namely that despite the MBA qualification, women face career barriers that are located within the organisation and its structures and processes. Without a breakdown in terms of MBA status, women managers as a whole have been shown to encounter problems and restrictions that relate almost entirely to their gender (Marshall, 1984; Davidson & Cooper, 1990; Cockburn,

1991; Walsh & Cassell, 1993; Maddock & Parkin, 1993). These barriers range from a lack of childcare facilities and domestic commitments (Davidson & Cooper, 1990; Coe, 1992) to an organisational culture which blocks promotion, undervalues the contribution they make and which for many women forms a hostile working environment (Marshall, 1984; Cockburn, 1991; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Walsh & Cassell, 1993; Maddock & Parkin, 1993). This research project therefore aims to assess the extent to which these, or other, barriers persist despite women having an MBA qualification

Objective 5

To ascertain the extent to which tokenism affects the nature and intensity of barriers experienced and the extent to which it impacts on the career success of female MBA graduates.

This is related to proposition two. A recurring theme throughout the literature, and one which forms part of the organisation-structure approach, is the role and importance of the numerical distribution of women managers within organisations in terms of establishing how well women fit into the organisational culture and the barriers they experience (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Ely, 1994). As part of the organisation's structure, numerical distribution and the dynamics of 'tokenism' may effect the extent to which the MBA can override structural factors and facilitate career progress. The level and extent of 'sex integration' has been shown to have a powerful influence on women's experiences in the organisation (Gutek, 1985; Ely,

1994). Where women are in the minority particularly at senior levels, they encounter hostility and resistance which is less prevalent in sex integrated organisations. Other work suggests that the numerical distribution of women is secondary to patriarchal power structures that follow women into the organisation so that, irrespective of gender mix, women experience the culture as alien and male (Cockburn, 1991; Cassell & Walsh, 1994). Therefore, even in integrated environments where male and female managers are more equally proportioned, a male dominated culture exists that can override structural factors associated with numbers. In both cases, the MBA would be largely ineffective in breaking down these more hidden barriers. However, an analysis of the dynamics of numbers would help to establish the power of the MBA, of organisational structures and, to some extent, the power of patriarchal culture in the development of women's careers.

Although the focus of this research is primarily on women MBAs, comparisons will be made with men in terms of both profile, labour market position and career barriers in order to highlight key differences. This will not only help our understanding of women's position but also help to avoid a sexist methodology which either leaves men out altogether (Stanley & Wise, 1983; Morgan, 1990) or assumes they are the norm against women are to be measured (Roberts, 1990). The latter can be partly avoided if the researcher is aware of this danger in the course of the inquiry and compensates for any possible bias. However, this issue is discussed more fully in the methodology chapter.

1.5 Research Questions

The objectives outlined in the previous section correspond to the following questions:

1. **What is the profile of the female MBA graduate and how does this differ from male MBA graduates and from women managers generally** (objectives 1 and 2)

2 **What impact does the MBA have on male and female MBA graduates in the labour market** (objective 3)

3 **What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these career barriers impact on the careers, experiences and behaviours** (objective 4)

4. **To what extent does the MBA help women to overcome career barriers** (objectives 4)

5. **What are the implications of tokenism for career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs** (objective 5)

1.6 Thesis Outline

The thesis comprises ten chapters, including this Introduction (Chapter One). Chapter Two, an empirical chapter, summarises the outcomes of different studies on women's position in the labour market and women's position in management. Chapter Three explores women in management literature in terms of how they relate to the two research propositions. Chapter Four, the methodology chapter, discusses the method of inquiry and Chapters Five to Eight present the findings of the questionnaire survey and of the interviews. Chapter Nine, the discussion chapter, sets these findings within the broader context of recent research and literature and integrates the quantitative and qualitative research. Chapter Ten returns to the two research propositions, draws conclusions on the basis of the research data and the theoretical framework and presents a gender specific model of qualifications and managerial career success.

1.7 Summary

The overall aim of this research is to assess the extent to which an MBA helps women. In testing the two propositions above, it is hoped that the research outcome will add significantly to the debate concerning the role of individual attributes such as qualification levels, from the liberal feminist or sex difference approach, versus the role of organisational structures, from the radical feminist or organisational-structure perspective, in determining the career progress of women managers. The research project also hopes to explain the different labour market position of male and female MBAs, the differential impact of the qualification on career success and in so doing

hopes to contribute to our understanding of the role of this particular qualification in the careers of men and women.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN AT WORK: EVIDENCE ON THE LABOUR MARKET POSITION OF WOMEN MANAGERS AND MBA GRADUATES

2.1 Introduction

Women's position in the labour market and in management suggests that, despite improvements over time, certain barriers exist to career progression (Marshall, 1984; Coe, 1992; Ibarra, 1993). Inequalities in the labour market mean that women are often concentrated in low paying and low status occupations and these inequalities are found perhaps more starkly in the area of management, where women are much more likely to occupy junior positions and where their representation decreases sharply with management level (Rycroft, 1989; Coe, 1992; Davidson & Cooper, 1992). An understanding of the broader context within which male and female MBA graduates work is an important first step in an assessment of their career progress and career barriers. This chapter therefore aims to provide this context and to outline some of the empirical evidence on women's position at work, particularly in the management sector, so as to provide a foundation for the analysis of the labour market position of women MBAs and for the testing of the two propositions outlined in Chapter One (section 1.3).

This chapter is divided into two parts:

Part A considers the position of women managers within the labour market

Part B discusses key changes in management and management education and considers empirical evidence on the position of MBA graduates

2.2 PART A Women Managers' Position in the Labour Market

Women are entering the labour market in increasing numbers. In the 1950's women comprised less than a third of the workforce. By the 1990's the figure was almost a half, with nearly three quarters of adult women in or available for work (Sly, 1993) compared with only 63% in 1979 (Labour Force survey, 1996). However, this rising trend hides gender divisions whereby women are concentrated in services and in a few occupations such as clerical, health services and education (Labour Force survey, 1994, 1996). These divisions at work are reflected in differential pay. For example, in 1996, female employees working full time on adult rates received only 80% of the average hourly earnings of their male equivalents (New Earning Survey, 1996).

The inequalities that women face in the labour market are reproduced even more starkly in the area of management. From the most junior manager to the most senior board level director, men outnumber women and the further up the hierarchy you go

the greater the disparity (Coe, 1992; IM, 1995; Rycroft. 1989).

2.2.1 Profile

Some of the differences in managerial level between male and female managers may be attributable to age differences. A recent Institute of Management (IM) study found that women managers are on average 8 years younger than men (IM, 1995). They are also less likely to be married or to have children and more likely to be divorced or separated. For example in an Institute of Management study by Coe (1992), one third of women managers were unmarried compared to only 8% of men, and 86% of the married sample of men had children compared to only 49% of women. Also, in a study by Davidson (1991), women managers were found to be twice as likely as men to be divorced or separated and to have come from middle class backgrounds. At the same time, women managers appear to be better qualified than men in terms of academic credentials. In Coe's study, for example, 44% of women had a post graduate/Masters degree or equivalent qualification against 28% of men. Despite this, women managers earn less than men (Davidson, 1991; Coe, 1992), a factor that may be related to differences in management level.

2.2.2 Management level

Nationally, it is difficult to obtain accurate figures on the proportion of women managers. Estimates vary depending on the definition of manager used within the firm and the industry or occupational group being examined - for example a middle

manager in a large organisation may be seen as a senior one in a small business - and this may well account for certain anomalies in the statistics.

Broadly defined, there may be up to 3 million managers in the UK today and according to a recent Labour Force survey (1996), 27% of them are women. However, of the million or so middle or senior managers in the UK perhaps only 4% are women. The 1992 British Institute of Management (BIM) National Management Salary Survey, covering over 20,000 individuals employed by 350 companies, gave a more conservative estimate than the Labour Force Survey and found that only 8.6% of their sample were female. By the 1993 survey this figure had risen slightly to 10.2%, and, after a decline in 1994 to 9.5%, stood in 1995 at 10.7% (National Management Salaries Survey, 1995). However, women IM members (previously British Institute of Management) are not wholly representative of the female management population in that they appear to be more senior than women managers in general (Coe, 1992). These figures therefore are unlikely to capture those women working at junior or lower middle management level.

Despite problems of measurement all estimates confirm that there is a paucity of women at top levels of management. Coe (1992) found in her study that at the middle and lower levels of management women members were nearly as well represented as men but that only 7% described themselves as Chair or Chief Executive compared to 15% of men. More recently, the 1995 National Management Salaries Survey found the proportion of women declined with each level of responsibility so that almost 56% of their number were employed in the two least

senior positions - Section Leaders and Seniors. - where they make up 14.2 per cent of the sample but only 5.8% of the more senior function heads and 3% of directors.

These figures conform to earlier findings by the Hansard Society Commission, in a study of the top 200 CBI firms, which revealed that women made up 6.7% of senior managers. However, at board level women made up only 0.5% of executive directors (Hansard, 1990). Recent data suggests a small improvement on these figures. For example, in 1991, the Institute of Directors calculated that of its 35.000 members about 6% were women and the IM has found that the number of female directors has increased from 2.8% to 3.0% between 1994 and 1995. The proportion of women in these top positions, however, is still extremely small (Holton et al, 1995).

2.2.3 An Upward Trend

Despite these rather depressing figures, some evidence suggests an upward trend in the opportunities for women managers. Managers are recognised as being an increasingly important group of employees - about 90,000 people are appointed to their first managerial job each year (The Institute for Employment Research, 1988). This, together with the decline in employment in the traditionally male dominated manufacturing sector and the accompanying rise in employment in the service sector (EOC, 1993) should assist women in their climb up the corporate hierarchy. At the same time, Opportunity 2000, the voluntary campaign set up to improve women's position in the workforce, increased its membership of employers to 278 by 1994, representing 25% of the workforce (Opportunity 2000, 1994).

Perhaps partly reflecting these changes, women's representation in managerial positions has been increasing over the last two decades, though the pace of change has slowed considerably in recent years and with a slight fall occurring in 1994 thought to be associated with the recession (IM, 1995). According to the EOC (1993) women made up less than 5% of general management staff in 1971, but by 1988 they accounted for 11%. In managerial jobs outside of general management, the figures increased from 20% to 25% over the same period. A similar improvement was found in the 1995 National Management Salary Survey. In 1974, only 2% of Section Leaders were women (ie section leaders and senior staff) compared to 14.2% in 1995. Women's share of employment at Department Head level (Department and Section managers) has also risen significantly, but they made less progress at director level. In the 1974 survey less than one per cent of Directors (ie Chief Executives, Deputy Chief Executives and other directors) were female. By 1995 this had risen to three per cent (National Management Salaries Survey, 1995). However, as the BIM (British Institute of Management now Institute of Management) commented in 1992, despite these changes the rate of progress for women managers is "glacial". They are still very much in the minority in all management levels and their minority status increases considerably with seniority (National Management Salaries Survey, 1992).

2.2.4 Function and Organisational Activity

Although more women appear to be coming into managerial positions, they are still largely confined to a narrow range of organisational activities and a small number

of functions. From Coe's study (1992) and in terms of the former, women tend to be concentrated in organisations devoted to education and training (22% of women and 10% of men) and public administration/government (14% of women and 12% of men), reflecting the concentration of women workers as a whole (Labour Force Survey, 1996). By contrast, whereas 18% of men worked in an organisation devoted to manufacturing and production, the corresponding figure for women was only 8% (Coe, 1992). Not surprisingly, there was also a public sector/private sector split - over a third of women managers worked in the public sector compared to 24% of men. This may be in part because the public sector has traditionally done more to recruit and retain women managers and because the public sector is more rigorous in its approach to and adoption of equal opportunities legislation (National Management Salaries Survey, 1992).

Within these organisations, women are more likely to be in support functions such as education/training, administration or personnel - which, according to Rycroft (1989) are not generally seen as central to the success of the business so that they do not readily lead to senior management positions. Women also tend to stay longer in the same function, and are less likely than men to move to a more generalist (and senior) role (Jackson & Hirsch, 1991). Coe (1992) found that women managers were more likely than male managers to work in administrative functions (13% of women and 7% of men) and education / training (15% of women and 6% of men). Similar findings emerged from the more recent IM survey which found that women are still concentrated in Personnel, Marketing, Finance and Sales (IM, 1995).

At the same time, the functions women perform may well lead to stereotypes concerning what they can or cannot do in organisations and which serves to confine them further. Ferrario (1991) argues that assumptions about appropriate behaviours for women managers have parallels in the kinds of functions they are assigned to in organisations which are mainly of a support nature. Similarly, Rycroft (1989) refers to an assumption that women lack a "real business understanding" for senior positions and links this to the fringe roles they tend to perform. Kanter (1990) argues that this tendency for women to be assigned support and "people handling" staff functions means that these functions are then deemed as more appropriate to their "emotional tuning" and "greater understanding of people". This serves to enhance the problem by making women the "social workers of management." It removes them from central policy making roles and excludes them from key decision making positions.

What is not clear is how far women are entering support functions through choice or how far their selection is still determined by social and cultural conditioning. Specialising in one function - and especially a support function - is a clear disadvantage. Nicholson and West (1988) suggest that where women do reach equivalent status to men, they do so through different, more specialised routes. An American study of managers (Gatticker & Larwood, 1990) also found that men and women were progressing through different career paths. Both line and professional experience appeared important but line experience was less common among older female managers than older male managers. Women's careers were also less predictable and more erratic. Nicholson and West (1988) noted that women were

more likely to make "out spiralling" moves (changing employers and functions accompanied by a status change) than men. This may mean that ambitious women get blocked working for one employer and seek movement to another as a way of progressing. If this is the case it would suggest that women are struggling to overcome the disadvantage of lack of mobility between functions and that social/ cultural pressure do have a part to play over individual choice.

2.2.5 Qualifications

Women's participation in higher education has been growing and at a faster rate than men's. Two thirds of the 17% increase in student numbers in full time higher education between 1981 and 1987 comprised women. In 1996, 50% of full time higher education students were male compared to 60% in 1981 (Department for Education and Employment, 1996). Although women gained 50% of first degrees in 1995, they are still under represented on many scientific and technical courses. In 1995, women made up 18.7% of Maths and Engineering students, 51.9% of Humanities students and 53.1% of Social Science students (Department for Education and Employment, 1996).

As the profile of the woman manager suggests (section 2.2.1), she is better qualified than her male counterpart at degree level (Scase & Goffee, 1989) and at post graduate level (Coe & Stark, 1991; Coe, 1992). For example in their study of managers, Scase and Goffee (1989) found that 37% of women managers had a degree compared to only 22% of men. In a postal survey of BIM members, Coe and

Stark found that over half the women managers had a management/professional qualification of first degree level or above compared to around 37% of their male counterparts. Similarly, Coe (1992) found significant differences between men and women in relation to educational attainment - 44% of the women managers had a post graduate or Masters degree or equivalent qualification compared to only 28% of the men. However, despite this advantage, managerial and professional women have not made much progress in entering the ranks of senior management (Davidson & Burke 1994).

One problem may be the choice of subject at first degree level. In a study of men and women three years after graduation, Chapman (1989) concluded that the under recruitment of women on vocationally specialised courses such as engineering, science and technology helps to explain why they fall behind men in terms of pay and level of job. Over 40% of men and only 17% of women from his survey were employed in higher grade management or professional posts such as accountancy, engineering or senior civil servants and many more women than men were to be found in lower grade management and professions - such as teaching, nursing and middle management (Chapman, 1989). This he put down to the under representation of women on vocationally oriented courses and the over representation on 'softer' Arts and Humanities degrees, a view supported by Still (1992) who suggested that the tendency for women managers to have a liberal arts background serves to support employers' beliefs that they are lacking in business skills and knowhow.

In addition Chapman found that women graduates do less well than men irrespective

of the type of course undertaken. So although on the one hand graduates with a vocational degree were twice as likely to have a higher grade professional job after three years in the labour market, on the other hand twice as many men as women obtained a higher grade professional job irrespective of the degree specialism. In other words, whatever the degree men are more likely to be upwardly mobile - indicating, according to Chapman, either discrimination by employers or lower aspirations on the part of women.

However, the proportion of women on business and management courses has increased markedly over the last few years. From a figure of 10% in 1973, they now make up over 49% of those studying for Social Administration and Business degrees and 37.9% of those taking Business and Finance at post graduate level (Department for Education and Employment, 1996). In terms of the MBA, in 1988 women made up just over 10% of the total MBA population (Social Trends 1989) though this figure has increased to between 20 and 25% (AMBA, 1995). So although improvements have been made. they are still underrepresented in management education and this may well hinder their access to senior management positions in the long term.

For the population as a whole, only 12% of UK managers have a first or a higher degree (NEDO, 1990). Fewer still have business or management qualifications. For senior managers the figure is higher at 24%. This, according to Handy (1987) compares unfavourably with the US and Japan where 80% of senior managers hold a university degree. Management is therefore not a job that most enter straight from

the education system. Promotion to management and the responsibility of managing resources, including people, is still often awarded on the basis of perceived aptitude and experience as well as gaining qualifications, though qualifications are likely to become more important in the future as management becomes more professionalised (Rycroft, 1989).

Without further research it is difficult to draw any conclusions as to the role that the level or type of qualification plays in women's underachievement at managerial level. The results of Chapman's survey on graduates in the labour market points to a liberal or arts background as being a source of disadvantage. However, whatever their qualification, women do less well than men suggesting that men with lower levels of qualifications are being appointed or promoted in preference to their better qualified female counterparts. This casts doubt on Still's prescription for "capturing the corporate world" through the acquisition of better skills and knowhow via a more business orientated education (Still, 1992). Women to some extent are already doing this. One of the real tests will be what happens to highly qualified women who have embarked on a management career path since the late 1980's and which this research project hopes to partly address.

2.2.6 Pay

The disparity in earnings referred to earlier in this chapter is not confined to low grade or non graduate employment. Chapman (1989) in his survey of male and female graduates found that 35% of men and only 19% of women earned over

£10,000 after three years in the labour market. Male specialists - such as engineers and accountants, commanded higher than average salaries while women specialists tended not to be in the high paying fields of employment. However, explanations that focus on course options do not explain away the mismatch between men' and women's pay. In the case of accountancy, for example, where similar numbers of men and women followed undergraduate courses, 40% of men compared with less than 30% of women earned more than £10,000 a year (Chapman 1989).

Not surprisingly, similar disparities are to be found in management. In 1992, women managers earned an average of £25,054 a year against £29,945 for male managers (National Management Salaries Survey, 1992). According to the Equal Opportunities Commission, female managers and administrators employed full time earned two thirds of the average weekly earnings of their male counterparts, with a narrower earnings gap in professional occupations where women received 81% of the average weekly pay of men than in managerial occupations (EOC, 1993). In some professional occupations, however, there continues to be a difference between the average pay of women and men. Thus in 1992 female solicitors working full time received only 74% of the average weekly earnings of male solicitors (EOC, 1993). Similarly, in 1989 female business and financial professionals received only 78% of the average earnings of their male counterparts (Davidson & Cooper, 1992).

A more recent National Management Salary Survey (1995) points to an improvement on the EOC figure with the average earnings of female managers comprising 85.2% of the earnings of the average male colleague.The survey also

shows that females are some six to eight years younger at each responsibility level, which may have influenced the earnings gap.

Table 2.1 Earnings by Responsibility Level

	FEMALES			MALES	
	Average earnings (£)	Averag e age	Female earnings as % of male	Average earnings (£)	Avera e age
Other director	56446	43	78.2	72153	48
Senior Function Head	47604	39	82.8	57499	46
Function Head	39749	39	89.5	44392	46
Departmental Manager	33930	38	89.6	37868	45
Section Manager	29975	38	91.7	32697	44
Section Leader	26196	35	92.0	28487	43
Senior Staff	23080	36	94.6	24389	43

National Management Salary Survey 1995

Male managers tend to be better paid than female managers and, as the above table demonstrates, the differential between the two groups increases steadily with status with a wider gap for senior than for junior managers. At the lowest responsibility level covered by the survey, "Senior Staff", women earned 94.6% of the salaries of men. However, amongst Other Directors (ie directors excluding Chief and Deputy Chief Executives) average female salaries were only 78.2% of those of men.

Davidson and Cooper (1992) see part of the problem as the kind of low paying fields of management women have entered: retail, food and general administration. In their survey of 696 female and 185 male managers, differentials were found to vary according to the level of management and the type of organisation or

profession. The gender earnings gap was particularly wide for general managers and administrators in national and local government, large companies and organisations. Since the earnings gap for this occupational group is relatively narrow in the public sector, the report concluded that it can therefore be assumed that male general managers and administrators in large private sector companies continue to earn much higher average salaries than their female counterparts.

Evidence does suggest, however, a small upward trend in women manager's earnings power. For example, the 1992 National Management Salary Survey showed that while women still lag behind their male counterparts in absolute earnings power, the differential narrowed albeit marginally. In the year to January 1992 female managers' earnings rose by 8% against 6% for men and in 1995 female managers recorded a 5.1% increase compared to 4.7% for men. This slight narrowing of the differential has continued according to more recent figures which show that while male managers' pay increased by 6%, up from 4.7% in 1996, women managers have seen their pay rise by 7.4% from 4.7%. Women directors have seen their pay rise by 9.2% compared with 7.8% for men (IM, 1997). It is not known, however, whether this narrowed differential applies mostly to junior and middle management or to senior management level where the gap remains widest.

2.2.7 Attitudes to pay

It is not just differences in levels of pay that exist, however, but differences in attitude to pay - and this in itself may be a significant factor in explaining differential

pay between men and women. Davidson and Cooper (1992) found that even though women managers at all levels of the management hierarchy were earning less than male counterparts, it was the men who were dissatisfied in this respect. Other studies have found that pay and status are of less importance to women than to men - and that women value more intrinsic factors such as job satisfaction and personal growth rather than extrinsic factors such as pay and status which are more highly valued by men (Nicholson & West, 1988; Scase & Goffee, 1989; Marshall, 1992). Tony Chapman in his study of male and female graduates found that in terms of future salary men were generally much more optimistic than women in that they held greater expectations of pay rises in the future. Women's expectations on salary levels were considerably lower. It is possible that these different expectations filter through to actual pay differences (Chapman. 1989).

2.2.8 Marriage, Family and Caring Responsibilities

As section 2.2.1 has suggested, women managers are much less likely to be married, to have children and are more likely to be separated or divorced (Nicholson & West, 1988; Scase & Goffee, 1989; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Coe, 1992). From their survey of 323 men and 51 women, Scase and Goffee found that only 55% of the women were married compared to 93% of the men. The 1992 IM survey found that from their sample 92% of male managers were married compared to only 68% of their female colleagues and that 12% of women managers were separated or divorced against 5% of men. At the same time, the married male was generally viewed as an asset by employers while married women were seen as a liability (Davidson &

Cooper, 1992)

Although there is a tendency to think of the woman manager as someone who is having to juggle a career and domestic responsibilities, Coe's survey found that 63% of women had no caring responsibility at the time of the survey compared to only 30% of men. Most of these differences are attributable to responsibilities for children. Women are much less likely to have responsibility for children below school leaving age: 26% of women currently have children below 16 compared to 62% of men. This can be partly accounted for by age differences between the two samples though it does suggest that many women managers, for whatever reason, are not combining children and a career in management. They may, however, as White and Cooper (1995) suggest be delaying marriage and family in order to concentrate on their careers.

Although equal proportions of men and women in Coe's study felt that it was possible to combine a career with a caring responsibility (38% for both sexes) family responsibilities were generally seen as being more damaging to women's careers. Nearly three quarters of single interviewees from Davidson and Cooper's survey maintained that remaining single had proved a distinct advantage career wise (Davidson & Cooper, 1992) In Coe's survey, 42% of women managers said their career had been affected by a caring responsibility, compared to only 16% of men with the main reasons given being the difficulty of working long hours and the need to work locally. The IMS study by Hirsh et al (1992) also found that child care was a source of worry for three quarters of their sample of professional and managerial

women although senior mangers were less likely than more junior managers to think that career choices had been affected by child care considerations. In fact Coe's survey found there was little correlation between management level reached by women and family circumstances. The women with children were just as likely - or equally unlikely - to reach the top.

Nevertheless, for women with families domestic responsibilities remain unequal. According to Davidson and Cooper (1987) married women still performed most of the domestic chores, and in terms of support, women were more likely to give help than receive help from their partners. These findings are supported by Hirsh et al (1985) who found that 80% of their sample of male managers felt that their career took precedence over their wives. Only fifteen per cent of women professionals and managers believed their careers took precedence. This led Lewis (1991) to conclude that expectations about gender roles still follow traditional lines with women seen as the primary carer.

So although senior women managers are able, to some extent, to escape from the twin demands and pressures of work and home, for many women managers the responsibility of caring and of domestic commitments are a source of worry and a drain on energy resources. For some women the answer to domestic responsibilities might be to leave employment for a period of time. However, research on career breaks suggest, not surprisingly, that absence from employment often exerts a downward pressure on careers (Coe, 1992; Hirsh et al,1992). In Coe's survey, of the 29% of women who had taken a career break to look after young children, over a

third returned to employment at a lower level though in the Hirsh survey, rapid upward mobility of women managers after a career break often made up for any earlier career disadvantage.

2.2.9 Ambitions

One common assumption, for example, under the former view is that women are not as ambitious as men or as career oriented. Research, however, suggests the opposite may be true with women demonstrating more ambition (Nicholson & West, 1988; Scase & Goffee, 1989) possibly in response to the career barriers they face (Alban-Metcalf & Nicholson , 1984). Work orientations, however, may well change on the birth of children (Hirsh et al, 1992) and as Nicholson and West (1988) point out comparisons of levels of ambition between men and women are difficult to make because they are motivated by different factors . Intrinsic factors such as personal growth seem more important to women than extrinsic factors like pay and status - and yet it is the latter that is often taken as a measure of career success.

Recent developments, however, may be changing the attitudes of men in particular to their work and careers. Radical corporate restructuring and downsizing, driven by competitive pressures and the need to cut costs, could be dismantling the "corporate climbing frames" through which both male and female managers could climb the hierarchy. Long term contracts with clearly defined paths up the ladder are no longer so certain and delayering has meant reduced opportunities for promotion.(Kanter, 1983; Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Career progress means more career breaks and job

changes which have hitherto been a characteristic of women's career development (Burke & McKeen, 1994) At the same time there may have been a shift in men's attitudes to work - away from "organisation man" with total commitment to the organisation, and more towards non work criteria (Handy, 1987). Changes too have affected women though in different ways, particularly in relation to greater intensification of managerial work and an emphasis on performance and the need to work long hours (Kanter 1989)

2.2.10 Attitudes

Rather then focusing on characteristics of women managers themselves - whether qualifications, experience, ambitions or motivations - many studies on the barriers women face to senior management positions highlight the importance of external factors such as the attitudes of men in organisations to women managers (Hansard Society, 1990; Howe & McRae,1991; Coe, 1992). Examples include outdated views about women's role in society, about their capabilities, ambitions and expectations which, according to Howe and McRae, persist in the culture of companies and in their recruitment and promotion procedures. The predominance of men in senior jobs can mean that these attitudes remain unchallenged (Hansard Society, 1990). In turn, major changes in the distribution of senior jobs including those in the boardroom are unlikely to occur without changes in attitudes. The recently reported science based company chairman who is alleged to have said of a proposal to appoint a well qualified woman scientist, "I don't want a bright woman on my board" is anecdotal but symptomatic of the problem (Financial Times 11 Feb 1991).

The problem of attitudes was highlighted by Coe's survey in which prejudice from colleagues was cited by over a third (35%) of respondents as a barrier they had encountered in their career, and with higher figures emerging for younger and more junior managers and also for single women. In general, attitudinal barriers were perceived as greater obstacles than some of the physical barriers, such as lack of child care, which have traditionally been seen as barring the progress of women. Attitudes to women managers varied considerably by gender. For example, a third of women felt very positive about women in their own organisation as opposed to less than a fifth of men. Similarly, women were much more likely than men to strongly agree that women have positive skills to bring to the workplace (74% of women and 35% of men). It is perhaps not surprising, on the basis of these figures, that there may be a resistance on the part of senior managers to the appointment of women to equivalent positions.

One source of attitudinal barrier could be the view that management is essentially a male job involving male skills and aptitudes. According to Howe and MacRae (1991), the received view of management in general is of a very traditional, full time job requiring total commitment and an uninterrupted career. This view may disadvantage women who are more likely to have career breaks and prefer more flexible working (Hirsh et al, 1991). A recent IM (1996) survey pointed to increased workloads and stress, associated with downsizing and restructuring which could place a further burden on women in their attempt to manage their careers (Wajcman, 1996).

2.2.11 The Old Boy's Network

Various studies have identified an 'old boys network' in the modern corporation which serves to limit their progress up the hierarchy as key positions are allocated within the network (Howe & McRae, 1991; Ibarra, 1993; Maddock & Parkin, 1994). The existence of a Men's Club network was confirmed by Coe's survey in which the Men's Club attracted the highest response both as a barrier experienced (43%) and as the largest single barrier (23%). Of interest too is the high response given to Prejudice of Colleagues (35%) and to Sexual Discrimination/Harassment (23%) as barriers women have encountered in their careers (Coe, 1992). In Scase and Goffee's survey of women managers, 33% gave Working Relationships with Men as a major pressure experienced in their work, though it is not known from the survey what it is about these relationships that women find problematic (Scase & Goffee, 1989).

2.2.12 Summary (Part A)

Women managers tend to be younger, single and more highly qualified than their male counterparts. At the same time career progress is limited by various factors that form the so called 'glass ceiling' so that women are poorly represented at the top of organisations and, even when working at the same management level as men, tend to receive lower pay. Potential problems include the choice of degree, family circumstances which may be more damaging for women, choice of management function, negative attitudes to women managers and the exclusiveness of male networks which isolates and disadvantages women.

Part B discusses issues that concern women, the MBA and management education.

2.3 PART B Changing Management and the MBA

2.3.1 Changing Management

Another factor of major importance to career development of managers is the large and rapid change affecting management. Much of this reflects shifts in organisational structures. Research suggests that organisations have become more flexible and less hierarchical in response to factors such as new technology, increasing globalization of business and competitive pressures (Wheatley, 1992; IM, 1996). Leaner management structures have emerged out of processes such as financial deregulation, the large scale privatisation of public utilities and the dawning of the information era (IM, 1996). According to Coe and Stark (1991) rigid hierarchies are currently being replaced by the team based approach and these are better adapted to predicting and responding to change. Kanter (1983) has also referred to a fading of hierarchy and to a greater interdependence between functions. What she terms the "post entrepreneurial" organisation is leaner and flatter with more channels of action, cross functional projects, business unit joint ventures, labour-management forums and strategic partnerships with suppliers and customers. According to a report by the Ashridge Management Research Group, the new market driven, flatter organisation is decentralised and fragmented yet integrated by overall strategy, corporate culture and information technology (Holton et al. 1989).

2.3.2 New Management Skills

All this has far reaching implications for managers and for management education. According to Wheatley (1992) the need for broader based management skills to cope with the more complex demands in the leaner organisation, such as the need to manage issues such as quality, service and new technology across the organisation, will lead to the growing importance of 'horizontal management' ie the management of lateral relationships as opposed to 'vertical' management based on the management of hierarchy. The modern manager therefore needs to be creative and flexible. dependent on networks to get things done rather than on position and hierarchy (Kanter, 1983; Barham et al, 1988). On this basis, the manager's own personal skills and development will be increasingly important in that to become fully effective as part of a team, they will have to work in a variety of functions, as well as across boundaries with peers and partners (Drucker, 1988; Barham et al, 1988; Coe & Stark, 1991; Parston, 1993). In addition, according to Wheatley, the delegation of responsibility together with a reduced middle management sector places a greater burden on existing managers in terms of the variety of tasks to be performed and in terms of work load (Wheatley, 1992). The new manager needs a creative vision and good personal and communication skills to be effective in the modern organisation (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Kanter, 1983; Drucker, 1988).

2.3.3 Women and Management Skills

This suggests that the demographics of management is changing with managers

getting more responsibility at earlier stages in their careers, with decision making being devolved to more levels of management thereby introducing more demands on their skills and capabilities. Perhaps in response to this, the educational level and aspirations of managers is continually increasing (Wheatley, 1992). Education and management development is certainly a key factor in the acquisition of new skills and competences. Increasingly management development is recognised as a "central activity which sits at the heart of every manager's job" (Virginia Bottomley, Oct 1991). At the same time the new 'softer' approach to management (Kanter, 1983; Rosener, 1990) may rely on skills and qualities which many women already possess and which, in the past, may have barred them from many senior positions. This could well put women at an advantage, though as discussed in the previous chapter, such distinctions may simply serve to reinforce traditional gender stereotypes.

Evidence on this is inconclusive. Findings by Ferrario (1991), Marshall (1984) and Rosener (1990), for example, suggest that women are more likely to adopt participative management styles or "transformational leadership" (Rosener, 1990) which demonstrate a concern for others and sympathy with their needs while men emphasise the task and its accomplishment through more directive management or "transactional leadership" (Rosener, 1990). Similarly, Vinnicombe (1987) found that women managers were more likely to be "catalysts" with high levels of charisma and commitment to staff as well as "visionaries", demonstrating creativity and problem solving skills. Men on the other hand, were more likely to be "traditionalists" incorporating practicality and common sense. Other studies, however, have found few significant differences between men and women in this respect (Davidson, 1987;

Donnell and Hall, 1980). The view that women may exhibit the types of behaviours which are likely to be more valued in the future as organisations become leaner and less hierarchical is therefore open to question - firstly on the grounds that such differences may not exist and secondly on the grounds that there is little evidence to suggest that women's progress up the hierarchy has been in any way facilitated by a supposed difference in management styles.

2.3.4 Management Education and Training

One outcome of the changes outlined above and the associated need for managers to acquire a new range of skills, has been an increased interest in management training and development in the UK since the mid to late 80's. This interest was also prompted by a growing recognition of Britain's poor track record on management education. For example, 80% of senior managers in the US and Japan have degrees compared to only 24% in the UK (Handy, 1987). US business schools produce 70,000 MBAs per year compared to UK's 4000 (1991 figures) (AMBA, 1995). In terms of in company training, Mangham and Silver (1986) found that over half of all UK companies appear to make no provision for training at all, with senior managers even less likely to receive training than others.

The deficiencies of management education, training and development was highlighted by the Constable and McCormick (1987) and the Handy (1987) reports, which both argued that Britain's managers generally lack the development, education and training opportunities of their competitors and which both emphasized

the importance of the MBA in management education. Handy's call for a "development charter of good practice" and Constable/McCormick's call for a "policy forum for management education and training" led to a major initiative by the CBI. This was the formation, together with the BIM and the Foundation for Management Education, of the Council for Management Education and Development (CMED) headed by Bob Reid, then Chairman of Shell UK. This newly formed organisation set up the Management Charter Initiative, drawing up a "Charter" of good practice.

The MCI is based on the idea that management qualifications in Britain should be rationalised into a clear and comprehensive system. This has lead to a three rung ladder - at certificate, diploma and masters level (the MBA) - designed to match progress through a typical management career. The certificate is appropriate for those entering management for the first time and aims to develop the techniques and competences necessary for the first two years of management. The Diploma level is set at middle management level while the MBA is focuses on the needs of those at senior or strategic management level.

2.3.4.1 The MBA

Both reports called for an expansion in the number of MBA programmes as part of the necessity for expanding and improving the provision of business and management education. As a post experience/post graduate vocationally oriented course in the general principles and functions of management, it sits at the top of the

MCI recommended hierarchy of management qualifications. Between 1978 and 1994 the number of MBA graduates from British Universities rose from 18,500 to almost 30,000 (AMBA, 1994). In 1980 approximately 1,100 students graduated, by 1994 this number increased to nearly 4,000 and the most recent estimate is 8,000 (AMBA, 1994, 1997). Overall then, there has been a considerable expansion in the numbers of students following MBA courses, and after a recruitment trough in 1992 associated with the recession, yearly increases have been approximately 15% (AMBA,1997).

Another change has been in the distribution of students between different course structures. Part time courses came into their own during the recession when students chose to keep their jobs while improving their qualifications so that by 1994 they became approximately a half of the total. Others opted for distance learning routes, particularly from Henley and the Open University Business School, the latter being the second largest provider of the qualification after Cranfield (AMBA, 1994). This lead to a fall in the proportion of students taking full time MBAs : for example the proportion taking two year full time courses dwindled to 15% by 1994 (in 1960 the figure was nearly 80%). In 1976 nearly 70% of students took a full time one year MBA but by 1994 this had fallen to less than 40% (AMBA, 1994). However, while the majority of students will be in employment whilst pursuing their studies, recent evidence suggests the full time course is experiencing a come back, particularly for overseas students (Times, Oct 27 1997).

2.3.4.2 Profile and Employment of MBA Graduates

In terms of profile, while the overwhelming majority (84%) of MBA graduates are male, recent figures suggest that the proportion of women is increasing with one quarter of those graduating in 1994 were women. The average age is 39 and students come to the course with an average of 8 years relevant experience. The vast majority (84%) have a first degree on entry to the course and 11% have a masters degree. However, relatively few come from a business studies degree route, reflecting the independent nature of the MBA . In other words, it is not a continuation of a discipline to a higher academic level but is a completely new course of study. The largest proportion have a first degree in Engineering (32%), followed by Science and Maths (19%) and Business Studies (14%) (AMBA, 1994).

In terms of employment, MBA graduates are particularly concentrated in the consultancy sector and finance with a fairly even spread among other sectors. Just under a third (31%) are in general management followed by sales and marketing (17%) , corporate strategy and planning (12%) and finance and control (12%). One fifth work in organisations with 101-500 employees and over a half (59%) are located in London and the South East (AMBA, 1994).

As a group they have enjoyed considerable success in their careers - 20% occupy board level positions and 27% describe their positions as senior management. The remainder mainly occupy either middle management or professional technical positions. In addition, achieving an MBA has improved their careers significantly.

Before the MBA the percentages of respondents in senior, middle and junior management positions were 9%, 25% and 25% respectively, after the MBA the proportions shifted to 16%, 24% and 13%. There were also changes in terms of function. Those in a corporate strategy and planning function increased fourfold after the MBA. This was accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the proportion in production, information technology and computing, research and development and administration - suggesting that an MBA helps its graduates to reach more central, strategic and general management positions and possibly to move away from "fringe" areas such as administration and IT (AMBA, 1994).

Generally speaking, over half who remained with the same employer during and after studying for the MBA reported that they were promoted or given increased responsibilities. Over a half (52%) changed function and 60% reported that their salary and benefits package had improved. Of those who were not in employment while studying for an MBA, 60% took up a new position commensurate with an MBA immediately after completing their studies (AMBA, 1994).

In terms of salary, a third of respondents earned between £30,000 and £40,000 (1992 figures). Only 7% earned less than £20,000, 8% earned more than £70,000 and 3% earned more than £100,000. However, the size of the financial premium attached to MBAs has declined over time. Those graduating between 1980 and 1985 reported an average increase in salary of nearly 40% (adjusted for inflation). By 1994 this had declined to 18%. This decline since 1980 possibly reflects an erosion of the scarcity value attached to an MBA as numbers increase (AMBA, 1995).

The most frequently cited reasons for doing an MBA in 1992 was that it was seen as a means of changing direction (95%) and that it was seen as likely to improve job opportunities (85%). By 1994 however, graduates were much more likely to see it as protecting their employment prospects. Two thirds of MBA students remained in employment while studying, and for the majority they received significant financial support. Over a half (57%) reported that their employer paid all fees and a further 16% reported that they paid a proportion of fees. Only 20% received no financial support. A further 18% were granted leave of absence and 55% given additional time off to study (AMBA, 1994).

Despite the support given to the MBA by the Handy (1987) and the Constable and McCormick (1987) reports, some controversy exists concerning its suitability as a form of management education. According to Porter and McGibbon (1988), the disproportionate interest given to MBAs is simply because the qualification forms the longest and most ambitious attempt to develop managers by a structured process. However, they question whether formal management education is the most effective way of training managers and argue that in-house development of skills and competences could be a better base on which to enhance management performance. Oliver (1993) argues that the MBA is outdated and according to Freeman (1992) it has contributed to a decline in standards of management by promoting a highly individualistic, instrumental and competitive attitude towards business. However, whatever the view of the MBA and its role in management education generally it remains the most popular type of post graduate business qualification, and, as the above evidence suggests, has a beneficial effect in many ways on MBA graduates'

careers.

2.3.4.3 Women and the MBA

Other criticisms of the MBA concern its macho culture which, according to Leeming (1993) and Sinclair (1995) may discourage women from seeking some kind of management qualification and may go some way to explain the low proportions of women with an MBA qualification. The results of the 1994 AMBA survey demonstrate that the MBA population has remained overwhelmingly male - only 16% of MBA graduates are women, though the annual figure has improved and seems to have plateaued at between 20-25% (AMBA, 1994). However, the proportion of women being sponsored by employers has fallen in recent years which, according to Leeming (1994) may explain the growth of women on full time programmes where students tend to finance themselves and the fall in numbers on part-time programmes.

Several reasons have been put forward to explain women's low representation on MBA programmes. Although limited generalisations can be made from the small sample size, Dix's (1992) study of 19 women MBAs suggests firstly that the female subculture may not be conducive to the high level of investment that the MBA entails both in terms of time and money, particularly in the light of the lower returns that women may expect to gain from that investment and the lower value that some women may place on their careers. Secondly, the female subculture may discourage women from appearing to be too successful or too financially independent. At the

same time, women may find the stereotypical view of the MBA student as a type of "grab it all" young man who is highly ambitious and single minded in the pursuit of his career as alien to their own life experiences. This is supported by Sinclair (1995), who argues that the concept of both the qualification and of the student is a masculine one and may therefore alienate some women even though they may have the necessary credentials. Thirdly, family effects may be important in women's decision to undertake or continue with an MBA (Dix, 1992; Sinclair, 1995). The average age for embarking on an MBA (25-40) may coincide with a woman's decision to have a family. At the same time, women who are already on the course may experience stress and overload as they attempt to split their time between MBA work and family responsibilities (Dix, 1992; Leeming, 1995). Finally, Sinclair points to the tendency for women to have an academic background in Arts or Social Sciences which may leave them ill equipped to compete with men, who are more likely to have a training in natural sciences, both in the workplace and in entering training programmes. Despite this difference in academic background, however, Dix found that in terms of ability, qualification and skill, women MBA students tend to be on average of a far higher "quality and calibre" than the men, though it is unclear from her study how this was measured. One reason for this difference, according to Dix, is that these women have already gone through a strenuous hidden process of self selection to bring them to the point of application - overcoming their fear of failure, rejection and assumed inability, or what Leeming (1994) refers to as an "imposter syndrome". Therefore a greater proportion of women who apply are selected for the course (Dix, 1992).

Although lack of confidence and the need to comply with a female subculture of non assertiveness may prevent some women from coming forward to take an MBA, those who have already taken the course tend, according to Dix, to be risk takers who are highly self confident and independent and who exhibit considerable intellectual energy. Vinnicombe (1987) found in a study of leadership styles that women MBA students were more likely than men to be "visionaries", exhibiting creativity and progressiveness. At the same time they tended to have more personal charisma and to demonstrate more commitment to staff. While Dix found that both men and women embarked on the qualification because it offered a new challenge as well as a vehicle for a major career change, women wanted more responsibility, autonomy, sense of achievement and power rather than money. This is consistent with Dix's claim that women tend to seek quality of life with a sound balance rather than living for the job.

2.3.4.4 Effects of the MBA for Women

Despite Dix's anecdotal and rather optimistic approach, she has highlighted a number of issues that are important for understanding management education and in particular the MBA in terms of their value for women. Confidence building, increased knowledge and understanding emerged as important benefits in both Dix's study and in a more recent follow up study of MBA graduates in the health service (Ong, 1993). Contact with the student group itself was highly valued in terms of mixing with a people from different backgrounds. While not all people in Ong's study could pinpoint a causal relationship between the MBA and career progress,

they were frequently given more responsibilities. Nevertheless, organisational culture was seen as a key factor in determining the impact of the MBA on career progress. A culture which values career development and in which higher level qualifications are the norm are more likely to value the MBA. Many women, however, complained that their qualification was a threat to (male) managers - especially if they themselves were not educated to the same level (Ong, 1993).

The little comparative research that has been done in the UK on male and female MBAs suggest that women may not benefit to the same extent as men. In one study by the Business Graduates Association, considerable differences existed in terms of salary and status of employment with a wide gap existing between the numbers of women participating in the MBA programme and those actually making a living on the basis of their studies (Lloyd, 1987). In other words, having acquired an MBA, women may end up in occupations which do not reflect that level of qualification or expertise. A Manchester Business School survey found that women MBAs received 70-85% of the average salary of their male counterparts although women had only 86% of the job level so a proportion of the lower salary could be a reflection of job position (Crow, 1981).

Most of the work on MBAs and career progress comes from America where results suggests that women do not progress as far or receive the same level of renumeration as men. Cox and Harquil (1991), in a study of 502 MBAs, found that while there was no significant difference between men and women in terms of career satisfaction, women MBAs had significantly fewer management promotions and that being

female had a depressing effect on career success. Moreover, salary growth for women was still significantly smaller than for men even after controlling for performance, age, experience, starting salary and career paths. However, starting level and starting salary were found to be important to later success in advancement, consistent with research of Hall (1976) and Schein (1978) on the importance of first jobs to ultimate career success. In this research, differences in upward mobility and hierarchical positions in the early stages of managerial careers was found to have a great impact on later stages. This conforms with Cox and Harquil's study, where women MBAs were disadvantaged compared to men in terms of career experience and where this was found to be largely due to systematic gender related differences in starting salaries, starting job levels and company seniority.

Some studies confirm that women do have lower salaries immediately after graduation. For example, a survey of MBA graduates at US business schools found women were earning an average of 12% less than men with similar experience after completing their course (Roman, 1990; Gitlow, 1992). Other studies suggest little difference in starting salary (Olson and Good, 1990; Wallace, 1989) or in salaries four or five years post MBA (Strober, 1982; Wallace, 1989). However, the pay gap appears to widen with time so that salaries of MBAs further out (ie 8-11 years after graduation) show men earning significantly more than women (Schneer and Reitman, 1990; Olson and Frieze, 1987).

The possibility that women MBAs still meet obstacles to their career was supported by Bishop and Soloman (1989) who, in a study of full time employed MBA

students, found that women were more likely to believe that career rewards were due to fate, luck or the power of others while men were more likely to believe that they control, through their own behaviour, the reinforcements they receive . Despite the fact that by undertaking an MBA, men and women indicate a belief in their power to influence the quality of career reinforcements, Bishop and Soloman found that older women MBA students in particular were less confident in the efficacy of their behaviour than other MBAs and they suggest that this may reflect lower expectations and a relative lack of success in a later career stage. This possibility was supported by Schneer and Reitman (1994) who, in a longitudinal study of MBA graduates, found that while little difference emerged between men and women MBAs in terms of income, job satisfaction, boss appreciation and levels of discrimination, a wider gap emerged by mid career so that by this stage the work environment was seen as less supportive.

Given the importance found of starting level and starting salaries to subsequent career success, Cox and Harquil suggest gender differences in how MBAs evaluate job offers. For example, some research has shown that men have higher salary expectations and higher salary standards than women (Summers, 1988; Subich et al, 1989) which may mean that men are less likely to accept a salary offer that is below average for a particular occupation. However, as Bishop and Solomon found, no significant difference emerged between men and women MBA students in their career commitment. Similarly in a study, not of MBAs but of advanced undergraduate business students, Beutell and Brenner (1986) found that although small differences between men and women emerged in terms of some work values

(for example women rated a comfortable work environment and congenial associates more highly than men), there was strong evidence of stability in the pattern of job outcome preferences among men and women seeking business careers.

The above (mainly US based) research indicates a smaller return for women from their MBA qualification and as such supports Dix's (1992) suggestion that women may not see the MBA as a good investment in the light of the lower returns that they may expect to gain. However, as Ong points out, management education is an important vehicle for equipping women with the knowledge, skills and confidence in their own abilities. According to Bickerstaffe (1992), women ought to perceive an MBA as a way of breaking though the glass ceiling that has hitherto stifled their progress into senior management. As the recognised entrance exam to higher management, the possession of an MBA could well unblock a career path and help women in their climb up the corporate hierarchy. This 'pipeline' theory maintains that, with time, women will accumulate the requisite management training and experience to be embraced into the higher echelons of management. Consequently an increase in the number of women taking MBAs and other forms of management education is deemed a central ingredient in this remedy (Sinclair, 1995). But as Sinclair points out, the male values attached to the MBA could well be part of the problem not the solution and, as Cassell and Walsh (1993) have suggested, such a 'person centred' approach, which argues that women have only to upgrade their qualifications, be more ambitious or more political, places responsibility for women's slow progress up the hierarchy, perhaps unfairly, on women themselves and neglects the role that cultures and structures can play in this process.

2.3.5 Summary (Part B)

Changes that are occurring in organisations seem to be opening up new demands on management and since the late eighties there has been increased emphasis on management education and training. The MBA has been at the forefront of much of these developments. It remains, however, very much a male preserve although the numbers of women on MBA programmes has been increasing. The impact of the MBA on career development remains sketchy with some studies affirming career progress (AMBA) while other, mainly US, studies point to a slower pace for women MBA graduates in terms of pay, status and management level than for men.

2.4 Overall Summary

Women now make up approximately a half of the workforce and female economic activity rates continue to rise, especially for those with a higher qualification. However, this rising trend hides considerable variations. Women tend to find themselves concentrated into a narrow range of occupations and industries, often associated with low pay. Similar inequalities are to be found in management with women concentrated in lower levels of management and in support functions which may well disadvantage them in terms of moving into general management. Figures on pay vary, but evidence suggests firstly that women managers earn on average less than men and secondly that pay disparities increase with management level.

Possible reasons for women's disadvantaged position in management include the tendency for women to have a liberal arts background at degree level rather than science or technology which is thought to be more advantageous in terms of career progress. However, men tend to move ahead faster whatever the nature of their first degree. Child care responsibilities are also seen to disadvantage women more than men, though the fact that women managers are less likely to have children and are more likely to be single than their male counterparts reduces the power of this explanation. Nor is there evidence to support the view that women are less ambitious than men, though work orientations have been found to vary with women placing greater emphasis on intrinsic factors such as job satisfaction over extrinsic factors such as pay and status. This may go some way to explain their lower pay positions. However, women themselves cite male attitudes and male resistance to women managers as key barriers experienced in their careers.

Changing management structures and practices, possibly originating in changing organisational structures, has led to the need for new and broader management skills and to an emphasis on management education. This has focused attention on the MBA as the top management qualification and therefore an important disseminator of skills and knowledge but which remains largely a male preserve. Various reasons have been suggested for women's low representation on MBA courses from the timing of the course to the impact of a female subculture which places less emphasis on risk and on investment in human capital. While the MBA benefits both men and women in their careers, evidence, though of rather a sketchy nature, suggests that men benefit more in terms of improved pay and status though this may depend on

the culture of the organisation and the value that it places on the MBA qualification.

This chapter has provided background of empirical evidence on women in the labour market, on women managers and on the MBA. Such evidence has driven the development of theory on labour market inequalities and informed the theoretical debate on the role of structure and agency, and on the relative importance of individual action, organisational structures and power. As part of the search for a theoretical framework on which to build the analysis of women MBA graduates, Chapter Three explores the diverse literature on women in management.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS WITHIN WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

Women in management literature is grounded in a wide range of disciplines and subject areas including feminism, economics, sociology, organisation theory and social psychology (Marshall, 1995). Consequently, there is no single framework for analysis and as Marshall points out, not only is the "wide ranging array of potentially contributing strands" each themselves diverse in their underlying frameworks, academic influences and approaches to sense making, but they are also subject to continual development and diversification as new contributions emerge. The problem, then, of selecting a framework for analysis and for subsequent development is not an easy one.

In reflection of the academic background of the researcher, an initial exploration took place of the potential advantages of economic theory in terms of undertaking an analysis of the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates. However, models grounded in economic theory were found to be too limiting in that they suffered from methodological and theoretical weaknesses when applied to problems of difference and/or disadvantage and tended to have a narrow focus in

their attempt to explain what, in this case, proves to be a complex issue. Organisational theory, on the other hand, appeared more wide ranging and flexible in that it could encapsulate the role of individual agency as well as of power structures and at the same time could be combined with elements of feminist theory to provide a potentially more powerful explanation for relative position of women MBA graduates in the labour market.

This chapter therefore aims to explore organisation theory. It does this by making use of Fagenson's (1990) typology and by applying Melamed's (1996) gender specific model of career success. More fundamentally, it contrasts the sex difference approach within the liberal feminist framework with the organisation-structure approach within radical feminism, both of which can contribute to an understanding of the role of qualifications in career success and to the position of women MBAs in the labour market.

The chapter starts with a discussion of the contributions of differing perspectives in feminist research and discourse in particular the liberal feminist, radical feminist and socialist feminist perspectives (as summarised by Beechey, 1987 and Walby, 1990). This reflects the different frames of reference of current explanations of gendered job segregation in the labour market. These frames of reference tend either to emphasise the role of women as active agents resisting their disadvantaged position within the organisation as in liberal feminism or to refer to structures and processes within society that systematically discriminate against women as in socialist and radical feminism. However, these three perspectives are in no way definitive

(Cockburn, 1991) in that some work may encompass two or more frames of reference and may well draw from insights of all three. From here the chapter explores women in management literature and makes use of Fagenson's three part model of the gender- centred (sex difference) approach, the organisation-structure approach and the gender-organisation- system approach in order to evaluate the diverse literature in the field. The chapter then discusses organisational culture and how it can be incorporated into a framework of analysis. Finally, the chapter considers different models of career development and chooses Melamed's (1996) gender specific model as one which can be applied to an understanding of the career progress of male and female MBA graduates

3.2 Socialist Feminism

From the socialist perspective, women's lives are seen as being defined by both family and reproduction and by employment (Braverman, 1974; Cockburn, 1986; Stacey, 1993). In the area of employment, conflict between capital and labour leads to jobs being deskilled and degraded as accumulation leads to the substitution of machinery for labour (Fine, 1992). Definition of skill, however, is seen as socially constructed which does not always relate to the intrinsic nature of tasks performed. Consequently there is conflict and negotiation over what shall be defined as higher or lower grade jobs. According to Cockburn (1985) both the conflict and the outcome are gendered resulting in an ongoing sexual division of labour and skills. Men exclude women altogether or degrade the skills of certain jobs which then become female jobs (Fine, 1992). Due to greater male bargaining power, men move

up and out of jobs as they are occupied by women and systematically devalue women's work by constructing it as non-technical and inessential (Cockburn, 1988).

On this basis, the drive towards numerical flexibility (Atkinson, 1985) can be seen as part of the competitive drive for profits and lead to the exploitation of labour. Within the economic perspective, for example, dual labour market theory claims that employers benefit from having a core of permanent, skilled workers who form the primary sector and a flexible periphery of mainly unskilled, temporary or part time workers to fill remaining gaps, the secondary sector. This segregation becomes gendered so that men are likely to form the 'core' workforce enjoying more stable conditions, opportunities and higher pay while women are kept within the 'periphery' or casualised workforce (Walby, 1990; Storey, 1995). This is in line with Fine's (1992) argument above concerning deskilling as well as Cockburn's (1985; 1988) concerning the gendering of skills.

However, lack of evidence concerning the reproduction and maintenance of segregation is a serious flaw to the segmentation approach (Wilkinson & Rubery, 1994). More generally, socialist feminist explanations run the danger of being too broad to have any validity or strength when applied to women's current position in the labour market. As Collinson, Collinson & Knight (1990) point out, although the explanation may retain some validity for particular categories of labour such as part time work, it is inadequate in explaining the resilience of job segregation and the power and practices of management. Furthermore, it is difficult to treat women's oppression in terms of capitalism alone as women's domestic oppression predated

the capitalist system of economic organisation (Collinson, Collinson & Knight, 1990).

3.3 Radical Feminism and Dual Systems Theory

Radical feminism focuses on men's control of women's sexuality and reproduction rather than on the capitalist system and sees men as the cause of women's oppression (Stacey, 1993) The concept of patriarchy is used to explain the position of women in society and to analyse gender inequalities and as such forms an important part of the conceptual framework of much of the recent literature on women in management (Hartmann, 1979; Cockburn, 1983, 1985, 1991; Acker, 1990; Witz, 1992, 1993; Walby, 1986, 1990). The use of the concept has developed from Weber's (1947) early view of patriarchy as a system of government in which men rule societies through their positions as head of households to Walby's definition as " a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990). Despite admitted problems of universalism, ahistoricism and ethnocentrism, she uses the concept to identify six patriarchal structures: the patriarchal mode of production (domestic labour); wage labour; the role of the state; male violence; patriarchal relations in sexuality; and the formation of cultural institutions. She suggests that an individual's experience of patriarchy will depend on the interrelationships between these six structures (1990) and that they may change over time as one or other of the patriarchal structures takes precedence. In terms of women in management literature, Acker (1990), Cockburn (1991) and Witz (1993) apply this concept of patriarchy to the organisation and refer to 'corporate

patriarchy' to analyse the relations of domination and subordination between men and women at work (discussed in more detail in section 3.6.4). Such work, within the radical feminist perspective, has therefore informed much of the recent work on organisation theory and women in management literature.

3.3.1 Dual Systems Theory

A recent development within radical feminism has been to draw on the economic determinism of socialist feminists and to incorporate the economic system with the sex gender system to analyse female subordination. The dual systems framework uses the structuring principles of both capitalism, (the economic system) and patriarchy (the sex-gender system) (Walby, 1990). The two systems are seen as dynamically interrelated and reinforcing, though they may not always be in harmony. One area of conflict can centre on the allocation of women's labour time (Walby, 1990; Crompton & Sanderson, 1990). The interests of patriarchy, for example, may be to limit women's role in the workplace whereas capitalism's interests may be in utilising a cheap, female workforce. Patriarchal strategies would then be adopted to exclude and if necessary segregate women (if exclusionary tactics fail) from certain occupations (Hartmann, 1979; Walby, 1990; Crompton & Sanderson, 1990). This leads to the possibility of horizontal or vertical segregation as described by Hakim (1981). In the former, segregation occurs when men and women work in different types of occupations and is maintained by the recruitment of men and women into different jobs (Hakim, 1981; Crompton & Sanderson, 1990). In the latter, men are most commonly working in higher grade occupations. This

type of segregation is maintained either by differential recruiting or by confining women to lower grades within internal labour markets. In both cases, exclusionary tactics can be both patriarchal whereby male power and authority is used to deter potential female entrants, and credentialist whereby particular skills and qualifications are set as necessary requirements for entry which women may not have (Hakim, 1981; Crompton & Sanderson, 1990).

Dual systems theorists within the socialist and radical feminist framework incorporate the capitalist mode of production and the power relations between men and women but fail to agree over the way capitalism combines with patriarchy to produce gender inequalities. While it offers greater breadth of analysis, this in itself limits its usefulness as a framework for model building. Methodological problems exist in assessing the role of capitalism in creating difference and disadvantage in that these influences are difficult to isolate and their validity difficult to test. Such methodological problems are less evident with radical feminism, which takes capitalist structures as given. In addition, its emphasis on forms and practices of domination and subordination within the organisation together with the concept of corporate patriarchy means it is potentially a powerful framework for analysing the relative position of male and female MBAs and on this basis may be a more useful framework for inquiry.

3.4 Liberal Feminism

While radical and socialist feminism emphasises power and power structures through

concepts such as patriarchy, capitalism and class, liberal feminism focuses on individual rights and choices and ways in which the law, education and equal opportunities measures can put right injustices and disadvantage. From within this perspective, Spencer and Podmore (1992) who, like Witz, are concerned with the dynamics of exclusion and with the marginalisation of women in the professions, identify a range of factors which have contributed to women's marginalised position but not from within the wider structural framework of patriarchy or capitalism that Witz considers. Factors identified range from stereotypes about women and their suitability for certain careers to the unplanned nature of many women's career paths. Similarly, Still (1992), discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.2.5), refers to the need for women themselves to break through barriers to upward career mobility by moving out of fringe areas such as personnel and by concentrating on 'harder' subjects such as Science and Engineering at degree level rather than on 'softer' Arts or Humanities. Similarly, Bickerstaffe (1992), referred to in Chapter Two (section 2.3.4.4), advocates that women use the MBA to help break through the glass ceiling into higher levels of management.

This person centred approach emphasises the importance of equal opportunities and rests on the view that, on the supply side, women themselves can break through barriers if, for example, they try hard enough, train adequately or become more assertive. The drive for more qualifications such as an MBA can then be seen as part of this approach. On the demand side, firms and managers must for their part learn to recruit on the basis of gender free criteria. This, however, raises issues concerning the gender neutrality of bureaucratic structures (Acker, 1990; Crompton &

Sanderson, 1990; Collinson et al, 1990; Symons, 1992;). For example, according to Symons (1992) while giving the impression of what she refers to as a "gender neutral organisational logic" in which the values of the organisation are constructed in supposedly universal terms, equal opportunities policies at the firm level can be counterproductive and lead to a "legitimatory ideology" in which unequal outcomes are justified by a heavy concentration on fairness of procedure. This leads to an organised tendency to suppress gender rather than incorporate it explicitly into occupational life. Women are thus scattered and individualised, encouraged to feel that lack of career progress reflects lack of merit and have little or no base from which to challenge the prevailing structures and values. At the same time, men can be active in resisting equal opportunities practices (Cockburn, 1991) so that it is important to analyse the workings of equal opportunities policies within the context of patriarchal power relations and within the context of the threat that such policies have on those who will potentially lose access to some power (Green & Cassell, 1996).

While liberal feminism and equal opportunities ideologies fail to incorporate underlying structures and power relations into their analysis, according to Collinson et al (1990), liberal feminism does alert us to the power of agency that can otherwise be overlooked. On a broader level, they argue that by concentrating too much on social structures, both radical feminism and socialist feminism fail to examine how these structures of domination can be the outcome of active agents within definite social practices. As a critique of determinism, they go on to argue that structures imply a passivity among women which does not in fact exist. Women are and have

been active in making their own history. Without dismissing the importance of patriarchy and capitalism, Collinson et al point out that the power structures they throw up must be analysed in terms of the practices that compose them, which in turn requires an exploration of "subjective experience, agency and resistance". From an empirical study of sex discrimination in the recruitment process, they point to the power of agency to subvert formal equal opportunities policies as line managers (mostly men) struggle with personnel managers (mostly women) to resist formal and lawful recruitment practices. By adopting a more agency perspective, Collinson et al hope to fill the "theoretical blackhole" which they argue exists between the analysis of capitalist and patriarchal structures and their conditions and consequences at the level of agency. Individual attempts to preserve and maintain identity and security within existing structures of inequality are crucial in explaining how that inequality is reproduced. Therefore to explain the resilience of the vicious circle of job segregation, it is necessary to examine the asymmetrical nature of power in the labour market, the actions of agents and the identity securing strategies of key participants.

On this basis, the nature of power relations inside and outside the organisation and the role of individual agents in shaping their own destinies are all important factors for an understanding gender inequality. It is the aim of this study, therefore, to apply a both a structural and agentic perspective to the question "Does an MBA help Women?". This is necessary in order to test proposition 1, as outlined in Chapter One section 1.3, namely that the MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men and proposition 2, namely that career barriers faced by

women MBAs are located within the organisation and its structures and processes. At the same time, 'letting agency in' allows an analysis of actions, responses and strategies as barriers and disadvantage are accommodated or resisted at the individual level.

The next section carries the structure/agency debate through to organisational theory and women in management literature in order obtain a more specific model that can focus on the research question: Does an MBA help Women?.

3.5 From Feminist to Organisation Theory

Organisation theory has moved through several stages over the last thirty years, from a gender blind approach which assumes all workers are male (Mills, 1988; Burrel & Hearn, 1989) such as in the Hawthorne studies (Mayo, 1949) to a feminist critique treating women as a special case and finally to an analysis of organisations as gendered with gendered relations being incorporated into an analysis of work, organisations and management (Marshall, 1984; Walby, 1988; Acker, 1990; Witz and Savage, 1992). These three stages have been reflected in the development of women in management literature and they conform to some extent to the typology introduced by Fagenson (1990) which provides a useful framework for research.

While the first fails to recognise the labour market as in any way gendered, the second relies heavily on quantitative analysis of gender differences in the labour market in which the underlying assumption is that women are somehow 'different'

or a special case. Fagenson (1990) refers to this as the gender- centred or sex difference approach. The third, which Fagenson divides into the organisation-structure perspective and the gender-organisation-system approach both centre around the organisation as dynamically gendered reflecting patriarchal power relations in society which systematically disadvantage women

3.5.1 The Sex Difference Approach

Within the liberal feminist tradition, the sex difference approach argues that women's behaviour and limited representation in upper level jobs is attributed to factors internal to women eg their personality traits, attitudes, career planning and leadership styles (Horner, 1970; Terborg, 1981). This is based on the view that whether due to biological differences or to socialisation, women possess characteristics that are in conflict with the demands of senior management where the promotable manager is seen as aggressive, forceful, competitive, self confident and independent (Green & Cassell, 1996). By contrast, women have been characterised as being caring, submissive and emotionally dependent (Schein, 1973; McClelland, 1975; Putnam & Heinen, 1976). Women therefore are seen as disadvantaged in terms of their traits and behaviours and have to prove themselves in a male world of management in which male characteristics are not only highly valued but are generally considered to be the 'natural' characteristics for the job.

One variation of the sex difference approach to management is the recent view that women may have different and more appropriate skills than men in the modern

workplace (Calas and Smircich, 1993). This new management emphasises transformational as opposed to transactional leadership styles which tend to be favoured by women (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.2.3). However, there is little evidence to suggest that transformational styles are actually increasing or becoming more dominant in organisations today. Furthermore, as Green and Cassell (1996) point out, this rediscovery of female attributes as valuable managerial assets is not in itself culturally neutral but serves to reaffirm traditional male and female qualities where the former has been overvalued and the latter undervalued. It also gives the illusion of equal opportunities and equality for women in the managerial world, while at the same time, in common with sex- difference models generally, obscuring the theoretical assumptions which sustain that world (Calas & Smircich, 1993).

While such an approach might appear superficial, overlooking as it does the structural features behind women's position within the labour market, it is of relevance to the research question: Does an MBA help Women? The gaining of more qualifications and skills to enhance individual attributes and to overcome career barriers forms the basis of the sex-difference and the liberal feminist approach to labour market disadvantage. The prescription for success, therefore, is seen to lie in improvements in those individual characteristics so that women can compete more effectively with men. As Burke and McKeen (1994) point out, women managers may embark on further qualifications and training in order to help break through the glass ceiling and in so doing implicitly accept the underlying principles of liberal

feminism. Such an approach, therefore, may a powerful motivating force behind women's decisions to invest in an MBA as well as behind equal opportunities and legislative initiatives. To ignore the significance of such an approach in an explanation of the position of women MBAs in the labour market and of the role of the qualification in career success could therefore lead to an analytical and a theoretical gap.

A lesser point concerns methodological orientation. Green and Cassell (1996) point out that the sex difference model has relied heavily on quantitative studies to document and describe differences between male and female managers. While recognising the shortcomings of this approach, such 'descriptive' data is required in this research project to build a profile of male and female MBA graduates and of their respective labour market positions.

3.5.2 The Organisation Structure Perspective

An alternative paradigm for analysing women in management is the organisation-structure perspective which focuses on the organisations within which women work rather than on the traits and characteristics of individual managers. In other words differences in how women progress up the hierarchy at work are seen to be due to features of the organisation. On this basis, the power of the MBA to effect career progress and to overcome career barriers could be neutralised by structural factors. Early work within this perspective is associated with Kanter (1977) and later Marshall (1984) who both argue that it is organisational structures rather than

women's individual characteristics which determine career progress. More recently, Ely (1994) has highlighted the organisational processes through which gender distinctions emerge and the ways in which the organisation may reflect and sustain women's oppressed status in the larger society via the proportional representation of women in positions of organisational power, a critical factor also discussed by Kanter and Marshall. Other critical factors, according to Kanter, which account for women not rising to the top of the hierarchy are their positions within the structure of the organisation in terms of opportunities available and the amount of power they exert.

According to Kanter (1977), there are two types of job situations in organisations: advantageous and disadvantageous. The former offers incumbents opportunity and power and are held by individuals who are in the dominant social category, ie men. The latter offers little power and opportunity and are held by individuals who are in the minority social category ie women. Advantageous positions foster attitudes and behaviours that propel individuals along the fast track and into positions of increased power where there is scope, for example, to demonstrate high risk or problem solving activities which serves to further advance status and prestige or to develop useful social connections. Individuals placed in disadvantageous positions on the other hand develop attitudes and behaviours which reflect and justify their placement in jobs with limited prospects and power. They may perform ordinary routinised work with limited opportunity to demonstrate creativity, they may lack social connections that can lead to "sponsored mobility" up the hierarchy, or they may exhibit characteristics of "bureaucratic powerlessness", one manifestation of

which is excessive rule following behaviour together with a cautious low risk attitude that reduces even further the opportunity to move into powerful positions. Thus, according to Gregory (1990), in management "women, being lower status members, are expected to provide encouragement and support; men who already have high status, have more opportunities to make task contributions, have more influence, and receive more expressions of acceptance" (Gregory, 1990, p258). The concentration of many women managers in support or people handling functions with limited influence in terms of access to main areas of decision making (discussed in Chapter Two, section 2.2.4) lends some credence to this view.

In addition to the position of women in the organisation in terms of power and opportunities, Kanter, Marshall and Ely see the numerical distribution of women as a critical factor in the analysis of women's career progression and behaviour within organisations. In Kanter's study, women working in "skewed" groups, where the ratio of men to women is approximately 85:15 are defined as "tokens" and are seen to carry extra burdens of visibility and to be subject to greater performance pressure than their male counterparts. Characteristic features of tokens and of skewed groups are firstly that they are seen as symbols of their category (ie women) rather than as individuals. Secondly, their presence generates ambiguities in terms of the group culture which is controlled by the majority (men) , who respond to that ambiguity by raising the boundaries between the two groups so that differences are exaggerated. As Kanter observed at Indsco, the American company in which her study took place, men's sense of male group camaradie deepened with the presence of a token woman. Tokens performed the function of audience for the "dominant

cultural expression". Thirdly, because of this heightened difference, women are marginalised and not included in informal networking which, according to Ibarra (1993) can perpetuate male customs, traditions and negative attitudes towards women. Tokens have little choice but to accept the culture of the dominant. Numerically, there are too few of them to generate a counter culture. Consequently, as Marshall (1984) points out, they do not identify with the organisation in which they are marginalised and labelled as inferior.

For Kanter, tokens can respond to their reduced status and their visibility in a variety of ways. They can be afraid to be too outstanding in performance in group events. This fear of success and associated reluctance to take risks can occur if the retaliation costs of succeeding in an alien environment are seen as too high (Kanter, 1977; Davidson & Cooper, 1992) or if stereotypes of inferiority have become partly internalised (Marshall, 1984). A second possibility Kanter refers to as the "Queen Bee" syndrome. Here tokens succeed but do so by acting and behaving like men - even to the extent of deriding and marginalising the women they work with or who work for them. They therefore disassociate themselves from the minority group to which they really belong and conform to their male colleagues' style of management (Powell, 1993; Ely, 1994). Being ' one of the boys' and failing to help or be sympathetic to other women was a frequent response, according to Kanter, to a token's position within a dominant group - a finding that was confirmed by Marshall (1984) who referred to psychological pressures to identify with dominant male members rather than other women.

Behavioural tendencies on the part of tokens can, according to Kanter, lead to one of four possible "role traps" which means that all subsequent behaviour is interpreted in terms of that role. These include the "mother" role ie the emotional specialist, the sexually charged "seductress", the cute asexual "pet" role and finally, if a token woman refuses to accept one of these roles, the bossy schoolmistressy "iron maiden". According to Kanter, by being forced into one or other of these stereotypical roles, women's independent action is constrained. The dynamics of "role entrapment" tends to lead tokens to a variety of conservative and low risk responses, either to reduce visibility or to reduce the likelihood of being pressurised into an undesirable role. Evidence suggests that such stereotyping is prevalent in organisations today. Marshall (1992) for example found in her study of women managers evidence of Kanter's role traps. In a US study, 80% of women managers claimed stereotyping of women managers was the main reason for women's inability to gain top jobs within their organisation (Fagenson & Jackson, 1993). Heilman et al (1993) found that male managers persist in viewing women in general as more deficient in the attributes necessary for successful management than men in general and male managers were found by Baack et al (1993) to harbour more such stereotypes than women managers.

In summary, token positions carry a number of contradictions. They are both representatives and exceptions. They are made aware of their differences but must pretend the differences don't exist. They are highly visible but at the same time are marginalised. By analysing these contradictions and by locating the position of women in organisations within the power relations of the dominant group where

women occupy token positions, Kanter provides a useful framework for understanding the dynamics of oppression and marginalisation at the organisational level. Such a framework can also explain how women may be driven into a narrow set of behaviours and why equal opportunities programmes at the organisational level have not made significant improvements to women managers' career progress.

Kanter's emphasis on the dynamics of numbers has been taken up by more recent researchers in this field. Such work has focused on these dynamics in determining women's positions within organisations and in determining the nature of the corporate culture. Ely (1994), for example, argues that it is tokenism at the top of the organisation that is the defining factor. In other words, the hierarchical position of the imbalance is an important factor not only in determining the experiences of the few women in senior positions but also in determining the experiences of women further down the hierarchy even when imbalances at those levels are reduced. Organisations with relatively few women in positions of power are experienced as less hospitable to women and less accepting of attitudes, values and behaviours typically associated with women (Ely, 1993). Gutek (1985) has shown that sexuality tends to be more prominent and more problematic in work settings where men are numerically dominant and MacKinnon (1979) has pointed out women's numerically inferior position in the workplace may lead them to market sexual attractiveness to men who hold the economic power. In a similar vein, Davidson and Cooper (1992) see tokenism as a key factor in the sources of stress and conflict women managers experience. Token women experience particular strains and pressures not felt by dominant members of the same organisational status. Pressures include feelings of

isolation and high levels of visibility. They are denied social support but at the same time there are pressures on them to conform to a restricted number of sex roles.

This suggests that as the numbers of women in senior positions increases, the corporate culture may become more hospitable to women. Both Gutek (1985) and Kanter (1977) argue that women's sexuality becomes less salient as the number of women in senior positions increases. Hearn's assertion that there are too many men in management (Hearn, 1994) carries with it the suggestion that an improvement in numbers may well be the way forward and that male behaviour can be modified if more women enter managerial positions. Women may then acquire their own dynamic which in turn can lead to cultural change (Hearn, 1994). Not all studies, however, have found tokenism to be a critical factor in this way. Cassell and Walsh (1994), for example, in a study of NHS managers found that despite operating in an integrated environment where male and female managers were numerically balanced, women still experienced the culture as alien and male suggesting that the pervasiveness of gendered assumptions located in organisational cultures can override structural factors associated with numbers.

Criticisms of Kanter concern her emphasis on the role of the dominant social category in acquiring advantageous positions, in excluding the minority and in controlling the group culture (Fagenson, 1990; Green & Cassell, 1996). Therefore, it is argued, sex differences in attitudes and behaviours within organisations are attributed to differences in numbers and positions within the opportunities and power structures rather than to gender. Accordingly, it is argued that her conceptual

framework does not include an analysis of gendered hierarchies and social relations that maintain and reproduce the exclusion of women from management, in other words how structural inferiorities outside are reproduced inside the organisation so that the organisation itself becomes a defining principle of patriarchal power relations. However, while Kanter may not have explicitly incorporated power in the form of corporate patriarchy into her analysis, the framework remains a useful one in that it allows an analysis of structural factors located within the organisation and of the impact of those factors on women managers. At the same time it does not rule out the incorporation of more recent concepts and underlying frameworks, such as corporate patriarchy, into the analysis of organisational structures. While corporate patriarchy emanates from the wider culture, systems of male domination form part of the structures and processes of organisational life and therefore can fit with the frame of reference of the organisation-structure approach.

3.5.3 The Gender - Organization-System Approach

The gender-organisation-system (GOS) approach builds on both the organisation-structure perspective and the gender-centred model to include gender, the organisational context and the larger social system. In other words women's position in management is shaped by a multiplicity of structures. It is based upon two assumptions about work:

- an individual and his or her organisation cannot be understood separate from the society (culture) in which he or she works

- when the individual, the organisation, or the system in which they are embedded changes, the other components change as well.

(Fagenson, 1993,p.6)

The GOS model provides a more systems-oriented view of organisations because it sees the status of men and women in organisations simultaneously with the organisational and societal context from which status differentials emerged. So while the organisation -structure position implicates power/ opportunity structures and the dynamics of numbers as being the main organisational variables that shape women's behaviour, Fagenson suggests that this be broadened out to include the organisational context, such as culture, history, ideology and policies. In addition, the GOS model suggests a third factor: the social and institutional systems in which organisations are situated (Terborg, 1981; Fagenson, 1990). Progress occurs not as a result of singular action, but because of interaction among social forces, including political and legal activity, societal beliefs and values, and organisational and individual action (Fagenson, 1993).

However, as Green and Cassell (1996) point out, methodological problems exist in terms of being able to isolate and measure the three key variables of gender, organisation and system. For example, precise definitions of organisational context and societal system variables are difficult to measure. Recognising this problem, Fagenson states that research projects need not include all the above variables and that those not included should be controlled for or monitored in some way. This

methodological weakness, together with the suggestion that some variables be excluded or controlled, recommends the organisation-structure approach if, as seems likely, it is the societal and contextual variables that are not specifically included in the study.

Furthermore, while the GOS model sees organisational culture as part of the organisational context, Kanter (1977) , by discussing how the dominant male group controls and determines the culture which then alienates and marginalises women, incorporate elements of culture into her analysis of the dynamics of tokenism and asymmetric power. In other words culture can be seen as part of the organisation's structure. In fact, as Ely (1994) points out, an analysis of organisations cannot be undertaken in isolation from the wider context - the two are inextricably interlinked. Organisations reflect wider cultural values and the two cannot be separated. Thus the organisation may reflect and sustain women's oppressed status in the larger society so that patriarchal relations of power follow her into the organisation where senior women managers are seen as a threat to patriarchy and where they encounter strong resistance and defences against them (Marshall, 1984, 1992). Therefore, the stereotypical views about women and the role traps described by Kanter are formed by the wider culture and, while organisational context and power relations in the form of patriarchy needs to be discussed more explicitly in Kanter's work, they are by no means absent from the underlying analysis. Subsequent theorists referred to in section 3.3 (eg Cockburn, 1983, 1985, 1991; Acker, 1990; Witz, 1992.1993; Walby, 1986, 1990) building on Kanter's work, on the organisation- structure model and adopting a radical feminist approach to the analysis of power and gender

relations, have taken this forward.

3.6 Organisational Cultures and Contexts

Green and Cassell (1996), in their evaluation of Fagenson's typology, includes an approach which integrates an analysis of organisational structures and gender issues with an exploration of cultures, in relation to theorisations of power and inequality which Alvesson and Due Billing (1992) refer to as gender and organisation analysis. Whilst its basis lies in the organisation- structure approach it also incorporates in an explicit sense gendered cultures. Unlike the GOS model which, according to Green and Cassell, lacks a developed theory of power to incorporate the gender inequalities that exist within the wider social system, this is a feminist approach which explores the nature of systemic, patriarchal power relations.

Cockburn (1991) and Witz (1993) argue that male power in organisations is 'systemic' in the form of a corporate patriarchy and that men actively create a cultural environment in which women do not flourish. Cockburn applies Hartmann's (1979) definition of patriarchy as "a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enable them to control women" (Hartmann, 1979, p232) to an analysis of men's sense of "owning the organisation" (p46) and to relations of male domination and female subordination in the organisation.

The analysis of culture and patriarchy is therefore seen as an integral part of an

examination of the processes that disadvantage women in the workplace at management levels and allows a focus on the hidden barriers embedded in cultural values that permeate organisations (Green & Cassell, 1996). Davidson and Cooper (1992) for example refer to a "culture trap" in which male values in the organisation translate into low self esteem for women. Marshall (1984) uses the term "men's room" to analyse how informal structures can supplement, contradict or undermine the formal structure and impact on the culture of the organisation. Other work refers to an "old boy's network" (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Ibarra, 1993). Failure to achieve membership of such groups cuts an individual off from significant aspects of organisational life such as sources of guidance and information, the means of evaluating colleagues and of establishing relationships, all of which restrict the opportunity for learning as outsiders are deprived of feedback on work related issues (Marshall, 1992; Ibarra, 1992).

As Marshall suggests (1984, 1992) many if not most organisations are dominated by male values. However, organisations can exhibit a range of cultures and still be located within a corporate patriarchy (Alvesson & Due Billing 1992). Maddock and Parkin (1993), for example, highlight the differentiated nature of such cultures which they loosely categorise as traditional and modern. The traditional cultures see men and women as being fundamentally different and include the "Gentleman's Club" (paternalistic, old fashioned) the "Locker Room" (an exclusion culture), and the "Barrack Yard" (militaristic and bullying). More modern cultures, such as the "Gender Blind" culture, deny any difference between men and women and insist that there is a level playing field of opportunities. This culture ignores women's identity

and experience and rests upon an assumption that all workers are "white, able bodied and male" (p35). A more ruthless form of the gender blind culture is the "Smart Macho" in which managers are driven by extreme competitiveness and where those who cannot keep up the pace are discriminated against. The new breed of macho manager is often childless and highly mobile, so while single women can compete on these terms women with family responsibilities are discriminated against. Finally, in the "Lip Service" culture managers think of themselves as non sexist, producing policies which they then ignore.

Cockburn (1991) and Acker (1990, 1992) also address the complexities of organisational cultures and explore the implications of gendering processes for discourses of sexuality and embodiment. For Cockburn, male organisational power and sexuality are inextricably linked so that even junior males have a degree of sexual authority over senior women and so that senior women can be "cut down to size by sexual means" (p141). This has helped to move sexuality from the private sphere to the public domain of organisations in order to theorise links between male sexuality and institutional power (Hearn & Parkin, 1987; Hearn, 1994) and has allowed a radical critique of the apparent gender neutrality of organisations. Acker (1990) adds to this debate by challenging the gender neutral assumption of bureaucracies and by using the concept of "embodiment" to analyse women's experience in the organisation, in which women managers are seen to embody the emotional, illogical and sexualised aspects of organisations in contrast to male managers who embody gender neutral rationality and decision making (Acker, 1990). This is then translated into interactions and discourse which help to make up

gender inside the organisation so that daily practices within the organisation collude with wider cultural messages concerning the inferiority of women. Women can conform to or challenge such discourses, for example modifying their behaviour to match organisational expectations of femininity by trying to appear feminine and blend in with the existing culture while at the same time demonstrating business like male characteristics of rationality or instrumentality (Sheppard, 1989).

Both Acker (1990) and Davies (1995) put gender at the centre of how organisations work and see it as an active process. Davies refers to the "gendering" of organisations where culturally constructed gender relations allow the daily business of the organisation to occur, stressing the importance of using 'gender' as a verb rather than as a noun (Davies, 1994).This approach emphasises gender differentiation and gender power dynamics as processes rather than rather than seeing gender as relatively uniform attributes of individuals or social groups.

The analysis of culture, patriarchy and gender processes, then, allows us to focus on the hidden barriers which inhibit the achievement of women managers (Green & Cassell, 1996). Although practical barriers undoubtedly exist which constrain women's move up the corporate hierarchy, mostly relating to the demands of home and family, recent literature has focused on the barriers embedded within the cultural values that permeate organisations and their practices and which are crucial to an understanding of women managers and their experiences. (Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Marshall, 1992; Walsh & Cassell, 1993; Maddock & Parkin, 1993.) As Coe (1992) found in her survey of women managers discussed in Chapter Two,

organisational and attitudinal factors (the Men's Club) were chosen by considerably more women as barriers to their career than more practical difficulties such as child care provision or family commitments (Coe, 1992). An analysis of culture and structures should not, however, mean that individual experiences and strategies are ignored. In the next section, the importance of agency is explored in terms of the ways in which women themselves resist or adapt to the organisational culture in which they work.

3.7 From Structure to Agency

Hearn (1994) highlights the gendered nature of organisations and focuses directly on oppressive male behaviour within the management context. According to Green and Cassell (1996) analyses of the impact of gendered organisational cultures and the effects of such oppressive behaviour on the everyday experiences of women managers is an area that merits further investigation. A focus on agency does not mean, however, a move back to the description of the personal characteristics of women managers as in the gender difference model. Instead accounts of differences need to be analysed within the context of power relations while at the same time focusing on the experiences of women within these contexts. In this way the "theoretical black hole" identified by Collinson et al (1990) can be addressed. A full analysis of structure can only be achieved if one also examines how that structure is reflected in and reproduced through the "social practices of human beings". In other words we need to explore how individual women respond to being part of an alien culture, what impact that culture has on their behaviours at work and what strategies

women use to accommodate the cultural demands placed upon them and the consequences for the women themselves

Evidence suggests that where women have reached senior management positions they make use of "gender management strategies" (Cassell & Walsh, 1993 p.111) whereby they modify their behaviour to match organisational expectations. These strategies enable them to cope in male dominated cultures (Franklin, 1985) and this largely involves learning how to manage their "femaleness" (Marshall, 1984; Sheppard, 1989). Attempts to blend into the organisational culture means trying to be feminine enough in terms of appearance whilst simultaneously being business like enough by demonstrating stereo typically male characteristics such as rationality and instrumentality (Sheppard, 1989).

From the above discussion it can be seen that there is a strong case for linking organisational culture and structures with the personal experience of women managers. In this way an analysis can be undertaken of the impact of individual action on career progress through the acquisition of an MBA, of gendered cultures and hidden barriers and of the adoption of strategies to overcome those barriers. In the next section, models of career success are discussed and Melamed's gender specific model is applied to the research question: Does an MBA help Women?

3.8 Models of Career Development

Models of career development, in attempting to map the forces that shape careers, coincide with much of the subject matter of women in management and consequently share similar conceptual frameworks to women in management literature. These forces include cultural norms and expectations, labour market segmentation in the form of professional and occupational labour markets, organisational structures and individual characteristics (Goffee & Nicholson, 1994). Therefore an exploration of models of career development, in order to understand the ways in which male and female MBA graduates progress, is by no means inconsistent with the development of a model based on women in management or organisational theory and may add valuable insight into the role that qualifications such as an MBA play in the career progress of managers.

Explanations for the slow progress that women have made in managerial careers have frequently taken the view that if women adopt more male patterns of career planning then improvements in career progress will take place (Goffee & Nicholson, 1994). Spencer and Podmore's (1992) prescription that women plan their careers more carefully and Still's (1992) assertion that women need to move out of "fringe" functions and gain more scientific qualifications are examples of this view. This assumes that general models of career development should fit women as well as men despite the fact that women's routes up the hierarchy may differ. As Nicholson and West (1988) found, these routes are often characterised by segregation in terms of function and industrial sector, more specialised jobs, interrupted careers and spiral

career progress with more radical job changes. More recent work suggests that the differential path for men and women is due to cultural, social as well as practical barriers that women need to overcome to achieve success (Morrison & Von Glinlow, 1990; Adler, 1993; Cassell & Walsh, 1993). On this basis, many researchers argue that a gender specific model is required to explain career development (Larwood & Gutek, 1987; Marshall, 1989; Gallos, 1989; Lee, 1993). In addition, as Gallos (1989) argues, career theories that have typically been built on the male model of success, assume that the centrality of work to identity is paramount. Women, however, may use a broader range of criteria for assessing and making career choices which may include such factors as locational convenience, the management of conflicting demands of home and work or the maintenance of social networks (Gallos, 1989). Therefore, as Lee (1993) suggests, any model of career development must include the diversity of women's experience at work and within the family.

3.8.1 Melamed's model of career success

On this basis, Melamed (1996) argues strongly for a gender specific model of career success. She classifies the determinants of and influences on career success into three groups:

- human capital attributes of the employee
- career options taken by the employee and

- opportunities structures open to the employee.

Each category is seen as gendered with varying impact for men and women.

3.8.1.1 Human Capital

In the category of human capital, Melamed includes job relevant attributes. These are attributes that enable effective performance in most jobs and include mental ability and education attainment both of which have a positive correlation with managerial and salary levels (Hunter, 1986; Dreher & Bretz, 1991; McClelland & Franz, 1992; Tharenou, Latimer & Conroy, 1994) including the MBA (Pfeffer, 1977). Although mental ability and education enhance the career progress of both men and women, it is thought that women benefit more from these job relevant attributes than men (Powell & Butterfield, 1994). Because women are judged under more strict criteria than men, only high performers (with higher levels of skills, qualifications and abilities than men) are expected to progress (Morrison et al, 1987). At the same time, education and experience are objective merits which serve to enhance women's credibility which, through negative attitudes and stereotypes, would otherwise be considered lower than men's. For men, on the other hand, the criteria for success are less rigid. They can rely on other assets such as access to informal networks as a means of progression (Cannings & Montmarquette, 1991) and their credibility is therefore not so dependent on objective factors such as education. On this basis, Melamed argues that qualifications may be more important to women in terms of advancing their careers than to men.

In support of Melamed's view on the significance of job relevant attributes such as qualifications, Burke and McKeen (1994) argue that women are more likely to see extra qualifications as a career asset than men and that in the face of career barriers and continuing frustration of career goals women managers have often responded with more qualifications to enhance their marketability. This may reflect a tendency to concentrate on the removal of overt career barriers such as lack of qualifications or training and to overlook hidden barriers which may not recognised by women themselves because discriminatory habits have become engrained into their everyday experience (Sinclair, 1994). Whatever the motivation for undertaking further qualifications, Melamed's suggestion that job relevant attributes such as qualification levels have a more powerful impact on women's careers than on men's, together with a recognition of the importance of job irrelevant attributes such as family commitments, may inform the assessment and testing of the first research proposition, namely that an MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men.

3.8.1.2 Career Options

Melamed argues that career move decisions will have a greater bearing on women's careers than on men's. For example, moving between functions within the same organisation or between organisations has been shown to enhance career prospects through greater visibility and enhanced experience and movements from one organisation to another has been found to reap greater rewards in terms of gaining a wider spectrum of experience than remaining in the same organisation (Herriot,

Gibson, Pemberton & Pinder, 1993). According to Melamed, women's tendency to move from one organisation to another in order to improve career prospects and to overcome career barriers is an advantage. Men, on the other hand, have a greater opportunity to progress within their existing organisation. Consequently, women are more likely than men to make a drastic change of career, to have a spiral career path rather than a linear one and to change employers more frequently (Nicholson & West, 1988). Therefore, although women's careers lack the security of the more static careers of men, their dynamic career path forces them to be more adaptable and helps them to realise the benefits associated with an active change of employer and job. Consequently, Melamed argues that career move decisions will bear more influence on the career success of women than on that of men.

Although the above factors may well be of continuing relevance for women, recent literature points to some important changes for men that may not fit into Melamed's predictions. One change concerns the decline of the corporate career ladder, driven by restructuring and downsizing, whereby men enjoyed linear career paths which linked positions with age and experience (Pearson, 1991; Nicholson, 1993). Career routes are now flatter, less secure and less orderly (Handy, 1987; Kanter, 1989). This, together with the fear of redundancy, means that managers must take individual responsibility for their own careers and can no longer rely on the corporation to provide a predictable career route. Individuals need to acquire the right mix of portable skills in order to enjoy a successful career in the new environment (Burke & McKeen, 1994). This has lead to concepts such as the "boundaryless career" (Arthur, 1994; Mirvis & Hall, 1994) which moves across the boundaries of separate

employers and is independent of traditional organisational career principles.

Such a development is rather at odds with Melamed's picture of a static and predictable career path often mapped out for men within a single corporation. According to Burke and McKeen (1994), in the face of organisational change it may be men who have to adapt their work orientations more in line with women's experience of a less orderly career path so that the career experiences of men and women may be converging (Goffee & Nicholson, 1994). On the basis of Melamed's model, it may be that the advantage that women have enjoyed in terms of a more dynamic career path, will soon apply equally to men.

3.8.1.3 Opportunities Structure

Careers are not just a question of individual attributes or choices but occur within social structures and social contexts. The intermediate-organisational level accounts for opportunities for career success offered by the structure and nature of the organisation and there are clear links here with the emphasis of the organisation-structure approach discussed through the early part of this chapter. The micro-social level refers to type of job, the importance of the job for the organisation and the amount of power attached to it in terms of visibility, effective interpersonal networks and proximity to key areas of decision making. This has strong connections with Kanter's view that opportunity structures and levels of power are critical factors explaining women's position in management (Kanter, 1977).

As discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.2.4), evidence suggests that women are less powerful at this micro-social level in that they are not assigned to powerful departments or functions (Nicholson & West 1988; Rycroft, 1989; Coe 1992). According to Melamed, while the road to success is open to men in all types of organisation, women's career success is more affected by the nature of the organisation and the job. Women flourish in environments where there are opportunity structures anchored in an equal opportunities policy, where they form the majority of the workforce, where there is support and where there is sensitivity to career breaks and flexible work schedules (Melamed, 1995). Therefore, according to Melamed, women's career progress is more sensitive to the organisational opportunity structure and the job opportunity structure both of which will be more influential in women's than in men's careers (Melamed, 1995).

Melamed highlights the various factors that affects men's and women's careers, incorporating macro factors such as cultural norms and the state of the economy as well as more micro factors such as organisational structures and the choices of individuals. In this way she gives a comprehensive analysis of women's career development, emphasising the importance of job relevant factors such as qualifications, career move decisions and the nature of the organisation and the job.

Melamed's account of intermediate organisational and to some extent the micro occupational factors coincides with the organisation- structure approach and its emphasis on the numerical distribution of women, on organisational culture and the importance of (barriers to) informal networks. At the same time, the importance she

assigns to job relevant factors , such as an MBA qualification, to women's careers in the light of reduced credibility due to gender and of lack of supportive networks, provides a sound focus for assessing whether an MBA does help women and how this compares with men. On this basis, Melamed's gender specific model of career success ties in with much of the work that has been done on women in management and the barriers they face, particularly from the organisation structure perspective. Of new interest however is the importance attached to qualification levels for women so that on this basis an MBA may well help women more than men in terms of securing career success.

3.9 Relating Theory to the Research Question: Does an MBA help Women

To answer the research question: Does an MBA help Women? and to address the overall aims of the project namely:

to assess the extent to which an MBA helps women in their careers

and

to ascertain whether significant barriers persist to their career development

this project makes use of the sex difference approach within the liberal feminist perspective and the organisation-structure approach within radical feminism. In addition, it incorporates elements of Melamed's gender specific model of career success.

The sex difference approach assumes that disadvantages experienced by women at work can be explained by differences in personal profiles and in labour market characteristics. It therefore relies on descriptive data to document such differences and argues that an enhancement of key characteristics such as academic qualifications and skills will enable women to compete on a more equal footing with men. An acceptance of these principles has been found to be a motivating factor behind women's decisions to pursue further qualifications such as an MBA. This approach is therefore relevant to an understanding of the role of the MBA in furthering career progress and relates specifically to objectives one and two of the research project, both of which rely on the gathering of descriptive data on key differences between male and female MBAs and between women MBAs and women managers generally:

Objective One

To examine the respective profiles of male and female MBA graduates in terms of personal characteristics (eg age, marital status, parenthood, education background) and career characteristics (eg management function, management role, pay, career path, organisational sector and organisational activity) in order to ascertain key differences between the two samples

Objective Two

To examine the respective profiles of female MBAs and women managers

generally in terms of personal and career characteristics (see above) in order to ascertain what, if any, key differences there are between the two.

At the same time, the focus of the sex difference approach on the enhancement of job attributes such as qualification levels in order to overcome career disadvantage, together with the likely impact of this approach on women's decisions regarding higher qualifications, is of direct relevance to the third objective which examines the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates before and after the MBA. Melamed's model of career success, which predicts that the enhancement of job relevant factors such as qualification levels may be more beneficial for women than for men, also informs this objective, namely:

Objective Three

To examine the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates before and after acquiring their qualification in order to assess the differential impact of the MBA on men and women and to establish the extent to which an MBA helps women

The extent to which the MBA enhances the careers of women may well be dependent on the nature of the organisation and on hidden barriers located within the organisation so that these structural features may override any advantages the qualification confers. As we have seen (section 3.5.2) an examination of such factors forms part of the organisation-structure approach located within the radical feminist

perspective. It also relates to Melamed's model with its emphasis on the structure and nature of the organisation at the intermediate-organisational level. Such an approach therefore is relevant to the fourth research objective which concerns career barriers:

Objective Four

> To explore the nature of career barriers experienced by women MBA graduates and the impact those barriers have on their career progress

Kanter (1977), Marshall (1984) and Ely (1994) see the dynamics of numbers as a key feature of the organisation's structure and one which impacts on women's experiences and on their career progress. In a similar vein, Melamed argues that organisational structures, which includes the numerical distribution of women, impacts more on women's careers than on men's. The extent to which tokenism is a critical factor in determining the organisational experience of women managers is of particular interest in this study. Not only are women MBAs still a small proportion of the total MBA population (AMBA, 1994), but women senior managers are very much a minority status (Rycroft, 1989; Coe, 1992; IM, 1995). In this respect 'numbers' are an integral part of the study. The extent to which the MBA helps women may well be affected by structural factors located within the organisation of which the numerical distribution of women is a crucial feature. Accordingly, the power of the MBA in facilitating career progress over structural factors located within the organisation can be carried out through an analysis of the

dynamics of numbers and of the impact on male and female MBA graduates. At the same time, such an analysis can address the issue, raised by Cassell and Walsh (1994), that such factors are less relevant to women's experiences than a culture of patriarchy that overrides these structural features.

For this reason, objective five incorporates a specific analysis of this key feature of organisational structure to assess its impact on the career progress of women MBAs and the extent to which it may undermine any career advantage conferred by the MBA qualification:

Objective Five

> To ascertain the extent to which tokenism affects the nature and intensity of career barriers experienced and the extent to which it impacts on the career success of female MBA graduates

In this way, the applicability of the sex difference and the organisation structure approach to women in management will be assessed in relation to a specific type of manager namely women MBAs. At the same time, the importance of agency will be considered in terms of how women MBAs experience career barriers and the possible development of strategies to accommodate or resist them.

3.10 Summary

While evidence on women's position in management is well documented, theoretical explanations for this inequality are less clear cut. As Marshall (1995) and Green and Cassell (1996) point out the area as a whole is underdeveloped and the contributions made come from within separate and diverse frameworks, including critical theories of organisations, analyses of gendered power relations, critical research on men and masculinities and theories of feminism. In a similar vein, Marshall (1995) refers to a "prevailing sense of flux and change" as the many potentially relevant perspectives on gender and management evolve and are challenged or overtaken by alternative views (p S55). Consequently, the choice of an appropriate theoretical framework, in an area which is developing and changing, is a difficult one. It may be necessary therefore to "hold theories lightly" as Marshall suggests and not to expect theories to have too fixed a form (p S56).

While Fagenson's typology of women in management literature goes some way to fill a gap in existing frameworks of analysis, it does not specifically incorporate more recent work on organisational cultures and processes and how they act to disadvantage women. As Fagenson has defined them, both the gender-centred (sex difference) approach and the organisation-structure approach are relevant to this inquiry. In assessing the extent to which an MBA helps women, issues of individual agency and the power of agentic decisions thrown up by the gender- centred approach can be set against a more structuralist framework which suggests that career advantages accruing from the possession of an attributes such as the MBA are

overridden by organisational structures and processes. The latter approach therefore reflects the need to incorporate organisational structure into an analysis of women's position at work. It also reflects the desirability for a focus on the dynamics of numbers, as occasioned by the minority status of female MBAs in the total MBA population, by the minority status of women managers generally and by the compelling arguments of Kanter (1977), Marshall (1984), Ely (1994) and Melamed (1996) who see the numerical distribution of women as a key factor of the organisation's structure and as crucial for an understanding of women's career progress and the barriers they face.

However, it is the contention of this research that the organisation- structure approach can be sufficiently flexible to include the more recent emphasis on the complexities of culture and power in the form of a 'corporate patriarchy' (Cockburn, 1991). An analysis of culture is by no means absent from Kanter's study. As she suggested, where women form the minority men control the organisational culture which then becomes more 'macho' through the processes of exaggeration and contrast. Whether in a more integrated environment the culture may alter to reflect the change in numbers, or whether senior women managers can significantly influence organisational cultures at all, is a current issue for debate and is one which will be addressed in this research project. What is of interest here, however, is the suggestion that the dynamics of numbers may be an integral part of understanding organisational culture so that the two cannot be separated into theoretically diverse approaches.

At the same time, as Collinson et al (1990) point out, there is a danger of concentrating too much on structures and crowd out an analysis of agency in terms of the power of individual attributes and decisions and the responses women make to these structures. Women themselves are by no means passive victims despite the structural disadvantages of their gender. They are active agents and active strategists in defining their own destiny. Therefore an understanding of the impact that a qualification such as an MBA has on subsequent careers must incorporate a recognition of the significance of agentic decisions, as evidenced in the very decision to undertake an MBA, in overall career progress. As Melamed suggests, it may be the case that an MBA has a greater impact on women's careers than on men's insofar as men's careers are already enhanced by their status of gender and by their access to informal networks. At the same time, women may also be active in resisting or accommodating the constraints imposed on them by the organisation's culture and practices. Therefore, in terms of addressing the overall aims of the research project namely:

to assess the extent to which an MBA helps women in their careers

and

to ascertain whether significant barriers persist to their career development

the analysis requires a focus that is diverse, reflecting Marshall's (1995) assertion that making knowledge in gender and management involves grappling with

diversity, development, flux and change in theoretical positioning. Such a focus needs to highlight structures within the organisation that may impact on women's experiences at work and at the same time allow an analysis of the hidden barriers that women may face and which may or may not override agentic decisions and strategies as reflected in different levels of qualification and skills.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND THE METHOD ADOPTED IN THIS INQUIRY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores issues of methodology in particular the role of quantitative and qualitative research, problems of integration and methods of feminist research. The decision to use both quantitative and qualitative methods is defended as well as the decision to use framework analysis. The two stage research process is recounted together with some of the problems and issues encountered in testing the research propositions and meeting the research objectives.

Chapter One outlined 2 propositions:

1. The MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men

2. Despite the MBA women managers face barriers to career progression that are located within the organisation, its structures and processes

These propositions led to the following five research objectives:

1 To examine the respective profiles of male and female MBA graduates in terms of personal characteristics (eg age, marital status, parenthood, education background) and career characteristics (eg management function, management role, pay, career path, organisational sector and organisational activity) in order to ascertain key differences between the two samples.

2 To examine the respective profiles of female MBAs and women managers generally in terms of personal and career characteristics (see above) in order to ascertain what, if any, key differences there are between the two.

3 To examine the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates before and after obtaining their qualification in order to assess the differential impact of an MBA on men and women and to establish the extent to which an MBA helps women.

4. To explore the nature of career barriers experienced by women MBA graduates and the impact of those barriers on their career progress.

5. To ascertain the extent to which tokenism affects the nature and intensity of

barriers experienced and the extent to which it impacts on the career success of female MBA graduates.

This chapter discusses the research strategy and methods which were used to carry out the above objectives. Key questions that need to be considered before embarking on a research project within the social sciences concern the nature of social reality that is to be investigated and how that knowledge about reality can be acquired. This is important so that the researcher can feel confident that the methodological approach chosen will generate findings that will contribute to the body of knowledge that already exists and will add to an understanding of the various issues involved. The following section explores some ontological and epistemological issues concerning this chosen field of enquiry.

4.2 Positivism and Qualitative Methods

According to a positivist methodology, social reality can be described objectively and only one true reality exists. This is based on the view that the reality of the social world is ontologically the same as that of the natural world and is subject to the same causal laws. This reality exists externally from participants and observers and its properties can be measured in an objective manner. The observer or researcher is therefore independent of and is able to detach emotionally from what is being studied. In this respect there is a subject/object dichotomy. Positivism sees what is being studied as the object. The subject, the researcher, studies the object in an objective and neutral way. The results of such study, which can be conducted on

a large scale and which according to Bulmer (1986) is oriented towards verification, confirmation and hypothesis testing similar to that which is found in the natural sciences, are factual in nature, quantifiable and hopefully capable of being formulated in terms of law like generalisations. This positivist-empirical epistemology, therefore, assumes a stable reality and one universal knowledge which we experience in the same way irrespective of gender, ethnicity or class (Code, 1993). Such knowledge is generated by objective research which, according to Alcoff and Potter (1993), is generally conducted by the dominant group (eg white males) and which has become the established way of thinking and operating (Smith, 1988).

The acceptance by the positivist tradition that the social world is the same as the natural world means that it consequently ignores the importance of the perspective of the social actors themselves and the meanings that they bring to their environment. As Morgan and Smirchich (1980) affirm, it is debateable whether it is possible for human beings to achieve any form of knowledge that is independent of their own subjective construction and ontology. In a similar vein, Stanley and Wise (1984, 1991, 1993) and Smith (1988) called for the validity of women's experiences to be accepted and investigated and that experience be treated as knowledge. The neglect of social actors' meanings and experiences led to the development of qualitative methodology which emphasises the different constructions and meanings that people place on their experience. Rather than searching for external causes and fundamental laws to explain behaviour as with positivism, qualitative methodology tries to understand and explain why people have different experiences. It therefore

aims to overcome some of the problems of positivism - namely its inability to penetrate the meaningful aspects of people's beliefs and social actions, its inability to examine non measurables and its limitations in terms of looking at beliefs and actions in the context in which they occur. Qualitative methodology seeks to understand human behaviour from the social actors' own frame of reference and from the interpretations which they give. This requires "an understanding of the social world which people have constructed and which they reproduce through their continuing activities" (Blaikie, 1993). In other words, qualitative methodology is based on the view that objective universal knowledge is not possible since knowledge is socially situated. This implies that knowledge is gendered, influenced by ethnicity and reflects power relations and that no knowledge is universal because ontology influences epistemology.

To explore these different experiences, the social scientists cannot be seen as external observers engaged in the task of measurement but "they must move to investigate from within the subject of study and employ research techniques appropriate to the task" (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). As Giddens (1976) pointed out, social scientists need to generate descriptions and explanations of human behaviour by "penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstructing the world" and according to Stanley and Wise (1990) this can only be achieved if the "biographies" of the researcher and the researched are incorporated into the research process.

Qualitative methods, therefore, are arguably closer to the data, discovery oriented, descriptive, exploratory and inductive. The emphasis is on social structures as something which occurs within and is constructed out of everyday life. One type of qualitative methodology for example, interactionism, adopts a non determinist attitude towards both the person and to interpersonal interaction. Behaviour is not seen as the result of any deterministic socialisation which lays down the basis for future behaviours. Instead it sees these as the result of interaction in which beliefs, expectations and a variety of other factors are used to construct 'society'. Structures do not exist externally but are to be found within everyday behaviours and events. People are seen as actively involved in constructing, negotiating and interacting. Similarly, ethnomethodology argues that what we might see as 'objective reality' is, in fact, contextually grounded and specific. In other words, it is not something that is objectively true for all people at all times but is instead the result of specific sets of encounters, events and behaviours so that many objective realities exist.

Therefore, rather than adopting the subject/object dichotomy of positivism, qualitative methodology, such as ethnomethodology, sees the researcher as actively involved in the learning process. Rather than laying claim to special expertise over other people's lives, and treating other people's accounts as unexplicated data the researcher should examine how people provide us , themselves and other people with the accounts that they do. The everyday and personal are both a topic of research and also the resource with which it works. The emphasis, then, is on how people construct and describe reality. The social world is seen and experienced by all of us as a 'factual reality.' Methods of research, far from involving a special expertise,

should be no different from the way in which all people go about knowing and understanding their everyday realities (Stanley & Wise, 1979). On this basis, however, research is likely to be small scale and, as Bulmer (1986) points out, this implies that it is non reproducible and ungeneralisable via the use, for example, of single case studies.

From this it can be seen that considerable differences exist in the two main methods of enquiry. These differences can be summarised as follows:

Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Paradigms in Policy Research

Quantitative paradigm	Qualitative Paradigm
Advocates use of quantitative methods	Advocates use of qualitative methods
Positivist in orientation	Phenomenological in orientation
Obtrusive and controlled measurement	Naturalistic and uncontrolled
Removed from the data	Close to the data
Verification-oriented, inferential, confirmatory and hypothesis testing	Discovery oriented, descriptive
Outcome oriented	Process oriented
Reliable, 'hard' and replicable data	Valid, 'real', 'rich' and 'deep' data
Generalisable; multiple case studies	Ungeneralisable; single case studies
Assumes a stable reality	Assumes a dynamic reality

Source:Reichardt and Cook, 1979 p 10

Such distinct categorisation of the two methods, however, can be refuted on many grounds. According to Reichardt and Cook (1979), all research methods, even quantitative ones, involve subjectivity to differing degrees. Nor is it possible for any method to be inherently valid and reliable as the quantitative method is claimed to be. Furthermore, the supposedly mutual exclusivity of the two research methods and the supposed lack of common ground between them, is unhelpful. As Mason (1996) points out, this polarisation simply creates confusion between epistemology, method and methodology. Methods are the ways of doing research, asking questions, collecting and collating information and making sense of it. It is epistemology which defines what counts as valid knowledge and why, not the method of inquiry. Therefore, as Reichardt and Cook (1979) argue, the method type is not irrevocably linked to the paradigm. This inevitably has implications for feminist research and for the criticisms that have been levelled against both qualitative and quantitative, in particular, methods of inquiry.

4.3 Implications for Feminist Research

One criticism of positivism is that it is a sexist methodology and therefore an inappropriate tool for feminist research (Bernard, 1973; Reinhartz, 1983). This is based on the view that positivism embodies 'male' concepts of objectivity, rationality and quantitative analysis. Therefore it looks at the world and makes evaluations or judgements from male eyes and from a male perspective, ignoring the fact that the world and 'reality' are not objective and exterior but are socially constructed and

given meaning by people. These meanings therefore may vary in different contexts.

One critic, Bernard (1973), argues that specific processes involved in the more positive research methods contain a 'machismo' element (p23). The 'controlled realities', which are formulated and manipulated by the social scientist while remaining apart from what is being studied, comprise a very masculine method of enquiry. The 'hard' or quantified data produced is generally seen as having more prestige than the production of qualitative or 'soft' data. According to Bernard, this is partly because it is men who are involved with the former and women with the latter. Quantitative is therefore equated with the masculine and qualitative with the feminine, a view shared by other researchers such as Stanley and Wise (1993) who reject positivism on the grounds that there is not just one true reality, but many realities dependent on people's experiences, and that the idea of socially situated knowledge is integral to defining a feminist ontology.

Morgan (1990), on the other hand, sees nothing inherently sexist in either 'hard' methods or positivism itself. It simply reflects a male demand for objectivity. This in turn is a manifestation of their own subjective awareness which assumes that all issues must be seen through male eyes. However, as Morgan points out, this does not rule out the possibility that quantitative data may well have a role to play in feminist research. At the same time, the qualitative and the personal are not necessarily lacking in rationality: for the feminist the personal is political and so a valid form of inquiry (Morgan, 1990).

This supports earlier discussion by Reichardt and Cook (1979) that epistemology can be considered separately from method. On this basis, a feminist standpoint can be brought to a range of methods. What makes feminist research is less the method used, but more how it is used and what it is used for. The general view that only qualitative methods, in that they are "non hierarchical, non authoritarian and non manipulative" (Reinharz, 1983, p181), can produce feminist knowledge can, on this basis, be seen to be erroneous.

4.4 Avoiding a Sexist Methodology

In any comparative study there is the danger of identifying one of any two samples as the norm and comparing one sample against the standards and assumptions of the second. The danger is even more acute when comparing men with women because of the history of male standards and assumptions which have been assimilated to a greater or lesser extent in everyday experiences of patriarchy. One frequent criticism levelled against liberal feminist writings is that they assume that the norm is male and that in their attempt to achieve equality they end up encouraging women to become like men (Marshall, 1984; Roberts, 1990). The emphasis of liberal feminist research therefore is to "add women in" to existing male theory (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Consequently, according to Marshall, (1984) in any male/female study men invariably become the standard against which women's experiences are evaluated. For example giving priority to intrinsic factors such as job satisfaction over extrinsic factors such as pay and status is often seen as inadequate and partly to blame for women's lack of progression up the ladder, though such priorities could be seen as

positive given alternative values. A sexist methodology can therefore be seen as one which makes no attempt to address this issue of male = norm assumption. It sees no problem in generalising from the experiences of males to 'people' in a way that never occurs in all female research populations. If seen at all, women are viewed as non-men eg labelled as underachievers or unassertive because men are seen as achievers and assertive. This view is endorsed by Roberts (1990) who identifies sexism as an ideology which:

> *" generalises from the experience of one section of society, men, to create an explanation of the experience of both men and women, of the organisation of society as a whole and of the power relations within it. Such an ideology both denies the experience and objective situation of women and justifies the distribution of advantage which arises from a sexual division, which division it both ignores and conceals".(p15)*

In other words, as an ideology sexism is pervasive and can potentially intrude upon methods of inquiry. A non sexist methodology, then, must at the very least take gender seriously (Dex, 1985) and see it as an important subject of research. But this in itself is not enough. Bringing women into the picture and then judging them from a male perspective as outlined by Roberts is equally sexist and is unlikely to produce results worth analysis. At the same time, excluding men and concentrating solely on women is not always the answer. According to Morgan, (1990) taking gender seriously must also include men as a framework for analysis. Feminist research must not confine itself to women. Men are involved too, in the practice of sexism, so any

analysis of women's oppression must involve research on the part played by men (Stanley & Wise,1993).

This conforms with Stanley's (1990) definition of feminist epistemology as "the analytic exploration of the parameters of oppression" which she sees as the defining feature of women's experience. However as Stanley points out, males are an integral part of oppression and should not be excluded from the research process. Alcoff and Potter's (1993) broader definition of feminist epistemology as "women's ways of knowing" also includes men in that, while such knowledge originates with women, they see it as not for the exclusive use of women but as a vehicle for change and for increased understanding by men.

In accordance with the views of Morgan, Stanley and Alcoff & Potter that it is necessary to "bring men in" to an enquiry of gender, this research project is partly comparative one. In any study of potential discrimination or disadvantage it is important to examine the role that is played by men in the reproduction of that disadvantage. Consequently, part of this research focuses on the different experiences of men and women in the labour market, differences in their profile - both personal and work related - and on the different impact the MBA may have had on their careers. At the same time, there is no inherent assumption in this research that women are to be judged against a male criteria nor that the male is the norm. Rather men and women are to be compared one against the other against a range of criteria which will hopefully serve to highlight the different experiences of male and female MBA graduates in the labour market.

Moreover, as a female researcher, it is less likely that I shall be bringing to my research male standards and attitudes which then form the base against which all variants are judged. In other words, rather than concentrating entirely on why women may have 'lagged behind' men this research will focus its enquiry equally on the factors that may have positively discriminated in favour of men and on the different motivations and priorities on which the different experiences of men and women are grounded.

4.5 Combining quantitative and qualitative methods

It follows from the discussion in sections 4.2 and 4.3 above that rather than involving a conflict of epistemological underpinnings, quantitative and qualitative can be used effectively in feminist research so that the one may supplement and give greater depth to the other. The two methods may also be used to elicit information on different sets of questions. On this basis, this research project makes use of both methods of research to document the profile, labour market position and types of barriers experienced (quantitative) and to examine how these barriers are experienced and resisted at the personal level (qualitative). The combination of the two techniques will consequently serve to enrich the quality of data produced. This research does not accept, therefore, that quantitative methods are sexist per se and therefore inappropriate for feminist research for reasons outlined above.

Salary levels, size of employing organisation, number of career moves, management levels within the organisation and number of promotions can be measured

quantitatively as can a range of other information such as age and number of dependent children. At the same time, some measurement of attitudes and opinions has taken place in the questionnaire. This included issues such as perceptions of barriers, attitudes to women managers and pressures experienced.

However, this research also accepts the importance of contexts and different interpretations of reality as emphasised by both ethnomethodology and interactionism, as well as the need to explore these differences. This inevitably involves, from a feminist epistemological perspective, an acceptance of the everyday and the personal as both political and as a valid source of knowledge. Inequalities, such as the realities of gender divisions in the occupational structure, are reproduced on a daily basis at the personal level in interactions and everyday experiences. These too form an important part of the inquiry and use will be made of qualitative method in the from of face to face interviews to gather this data.

Nevertheless, this is not to deny that issues need to be considered concerning the integration of the two types of data. According to Porter (1996) most attempts to integrate quantitative with qualitative are based on the primacy of the former while the latter is 'tacked on' and either used as illustration of the 'facts' from the survey or as explanation. In other words, the benefits of such triangulation lie in the checking of 'facts' collected by one method against the other on the grounds that "the wider the variety of evidence you can bring to bear, the smaller the area of doubt about your position" (p70).

This was not the purpose of integrating the two methods in this research project. In other words, the aim was not to cover a broad area through survey data and then use qualitative data to cover a more limited area of the same ground in more depth. Rather, the quantitative component set out to map out general patterns and trends and the qualitative to reveal organisational practices and processes relating to those involved. Nevertheless, the very fact that each method was focused on the same topic area (women MBAs and career barriers) meant that despite these differences some overlap in data was inevitable. This raises the question, mentioned earlier, about the integration of the two.

According to Porter (1996), while recognising the advantages of methodological pluralism, little has been written in its defence. Consequently there is a gap in the literature on how integration can be achieved. One attempt to fill this gap by Mason (1996) points to the need for "the working through of intellectual questions about what we think we are doing conceptually when we integrate different types of data as well as technical questions about how, in practical terms, such integration might be achieved" (p88). Mason suggests the need to incorporate the answers to three questions into the structure of analysis. These questions are:

- *Data on what? (What do these data tell me about and, crucially, what can they not tell me about)*

- *Strength of claim. How well do these data tell me this? How convincing are claims I want to make on the basis of the data?*

- *Integration of data. How best can I integrate and make sense of different forms of qualitative data? How can I integrate quantitative and qualitative material?*

(p99)

Mason suggests that the answer to the latter must take full account of, and be consistent with, the researcher's answers to the first two questions.

While not providing a blueprint for integration in any prescriptive form, Mason does at least alert the researcher to potential problems and issues which need to be addressed when using both methods. Fuller consideration of this issue in relation to the current research project will take place in Chapter Nine (section 9.5).

The next section explores techniques for analysing qualitative data. It starts with a brief discussion of grounded theory, of the problems of complexity and then considers an particular grounded theory approach - framework analysis.

4.6 Grounded Theory and Qualitative Data

Grounded theory provides an open approach to data analysis in which the structure used, rather than being imposed on the data as in positivism, is derived from the data. Grounded theory aims specifically to construct theory out of qualitative data so that accounts of experience can then lead to generalisations. This approach would

be particularly appropriate for research questions 3, 4 and 5.

Since its original formulation in 1967 grounded theory has been modified and has evolved with use. The original grounded theory derives its theoretical underpinnings mainly from symbolic interactionism (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) . Here, individuals are seen as ordering and making sense of their world according to shared meanings which are developed through a process of social interaction and which are conveyed through the use of reflexive symbols. The method seeks understanding through participants' own words and frames of reference and analysis involves a series of stages. These stages proceed from data collection/ transcription through category development/ testing to theoretical integration (in which a core category is identified and related to all other subsidiary categories) and finally theory grounding (in which the emergent theory is grounded by returning to the data and validating it against actual segments of text). If all the stages are followed grounded theory can provide a powerful method for constructing theory (Bartlett & Payne, 1996). However, drawbacks include the time consuming nature of the analysis as well as its complexity. According to Bryman and Burgess (1996) such complexity means that there are few genuine cases of the iterative interplay of data collection and analysis that lie at the heart of grounded theory. Bryman (1988) argues that researchers often give lip service to grounded theory to validate a qualitative approach and Richards and Richards (1991) refer to it as an "approving bumper sticker" in many qualitative studies which are often imprecise in the ways in which grounded theory analysis has been undertaken. However, according to Bryman and Burgess, grounded theory has been influential because it has alerted researchers to the desirability of extracting

concepts and theory out of the data. Also, grounded theory has informed aspects of the analysis of qualitative data including coding and the use of different types of codes and their role in concept formation.

4.7 Framework Analysis and the Current Research Project

Various models of qualitative data analysis have emerged from grounded theory and its original prescriptions as outlined by Corbin and Strauss. For example, Easterby Smith et al (1994) propose a seven stage method for using grounded analysis. These include familiarisation, reflection, conceptualisation, cataloguing concepts, recoding, linking and re evaluation. In this way inductively developed categories emerge from the data which are then related to each other to develop an explanatory theory. The theory developed is consequently grounded in the everyday experience of the informants by use of certain processes and techniques of analysis.

A similar approach, Framework Analysis, which was developed in the context of conducting applied qualitative research, follows many of these stages and also adopts a grounded approach in that theory emerges from data and in that it is heavily based in and driven by the original accounts and observations of the people it is about. It involves a number of distinct though highly interconnected stages which do not necessarily follow a particular order, some of which have overlapping qualities with the processes of Corbin and Strauss and Easterby Smith.

Framework analysis involves a systematic process of sifting, charting and sorting

material according to key issues and themes. Five key stages are involved in the analysis process. During the stage of *familiarisation* , the researcher gains an overview of the richness, depth and diversity of the data. As key ideas and recurrent themes are listed, the process of abstraction and conceptualisation begins. This relates to the second stage, *identifying a thematic framework*, in which key issues, concepts and themes are identified with which the data can be reexamined and referenced. In other words an index is developed whereby the interview data can be coded. According to Ritchie and Spenser (1996), during the construction of this framework or index, the researcher will be drawing on apriori issues (those informed by the original research aims and introduced into the interviews via the topic guide), emergent issues raised by the respondents themselves and analytical themes arising from the recurrence or patterning of particular views and experiences. While the first version of an index is likely to be highly descriptive and rooted in apriori issues, categories will then, through processes of logical and intuitive thinking involving making judgements about meaning, about the relevance and importance of issues and the implicit connections between ideas, become more responsive to emergent and analytical themes.

In the next stage, *indexing*, the thematic framework or index is systematically applied to the data in its textual form. Having applied the thematic framework to individual transcripts, the researcher needs to build up a picture of the data as a whole by considering the range of attitudes or experiences for each issue or theme, a process known as *charting*. Data is 'lifted' from their original context and rearranged according to the appropriate thematic reference. Finally, under *mapping*

and interpretation the concepts that emerged from the data are integrated in the context of the research question. According to Ritchie and Spenser (1996) this is when the "serious and systematic process of detection begins" (p186) which involves a creative search for structure rather than just a "multiplicity of evidence" and which, dependent on the research aims, leads to explanations, typologies and/or strategies.

This research project uses a grounded theory approach to qualitative analysis in that theory emerges from the data via semi structured interviews and in that the theory developed is grounded in the everyday experiences of male and female MBA graduates. However, issues emerged concerning the complexity of the process and about the relative benefits of using Corbin and Strauss's model over an alternative and perhaps less complex approach. Concerns about a mismatch between claims of using grounded theory in the form of Corbin and Strauss and the reality of the actual processes used in the research project (a danger alerted by Bryman and Burgess) led to a search for a more flexible, versatile and 'user friendly' approach and the subsequent use of Framework Analysis. This was not only a simpler approach but, as with original grounded theory, allowed the use of the N.U.D.I.S.T. (Non Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising) qualitative statistical package which supports the process of indexing, searching and theorising. It enables the researcher to manage, explore and search large quantities of text from interviews, to link ideas and construct theories about the data following the stages referred to above. By using the package, coding becomes easier in that the text can be searched for key words and relationships between categories can be recorded using NUDIST 'trees'. However, the researcher needs to develop as close a

familiarity with the data as with 'manual' methods so the package is a facilitator of rather than a substitute for systematic research. The use of NUDIST is discussed more fully in section 4.9.2.

4.8 The Interview Process

Whatever the method of analysis, the interview process itself, as a common form of collecting qualitative data, raises some complex issues about structure, bias, trust and social skills. According to Burgess (1982), the interview gives "the opportunity for the researcher to probe deeply to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate inclusive accounts that are based on personal experience" (p107). It addresses how people construct the meaning and significance of their realities (eg Kelly, 1955). Accordingly, while interviews can help overcome many of the problems associated with positivism namely its superficial and narrow focus through acquiring information on contexts, meanings and experiences, the interviewing process can be a difficult one.

One issue concerns the degree of structure. As Jones (1984) points out, interviews in which the interviewer poses a long list of questions irrespective of what then develops implies that the interviewer has already decided beforehand what is relevant and meaningful and has prestructured the direction of the inquiry within his or her own frame of reference. At the same time she acknowledges that there is probably no such thing as an 'unstructured' interview in that the researcher will nearly always come to the interview with some broad questions in mind. The

structure is imposed by the process of interviewing itself, in which researchers continually makes choices about what data they want to pick up, based on the overall research question, and explore further those that they do not. Semi structured interviews , therefore will incorporate broad issues for discussion informed by the overall research question but will incorporate sufficient flexibility to pursue (or not as the case may be) different strands of inquiry.

This inevitably raises the issue of bias in which the main goal of the research process is often seen as its removal in order to achieve reliability and replication (Jones, 1984). However, as Diesling (1972) and Filstead (1970) point out it is not possible to exclude all bias from social interactions. However, we can use our bias creatively to develop relationships and to create trust and comfort. What is crucial is that researchers choose their actions with a self conscious awareness of why they are making them and what the effects are likely to be upon that relationship. There is a need, for example, for awareness of social stereotypes which the researcher may hold about the interviewee and vice versa which may be based on first impressions and which may concern assumptions about attitudes, values and behaviours.

According to Jones, gaining good data involves essential skills of gaining trust, of listening, of judgement in terms of when to probe further, when to check meaning and when to change the line of inquiry. But these skills may not be sufficient to overcome complex problems of power.This may emerge if the interviewee is a senior manager so that problems may occur eliciting information of a personal or political nature which may be potentially damaging to the person concerned. There may also

be a tendency in such situations not to take the interview seriously and, according to Cannell and Kahn (1968), this can be minimised if the researcher presents him or herself as the same status as the interviewee.

Another power problem, highlighted by Oakley (1990) concerns the inherent power relationship of the interview, with the researcher the possessor of expertise, status, knowledge and power which the interviewee is supposed to lack. Oakley argues that interviewing is in itself a "masculine paradigm", the antithesis of what we mean by feminist methodology, in that the interviewee is viewed as objects of study and sources of data. Accordingly, methodology textbooks emphasise detachment and objectivity and see the interview as a mechanical instrument for data collection, as a specialised form of conversation in which one person asks the questions while the other gives the answer. The interviewee consequently is reduced to a passive role which, according to Oakley, is an almost classic representation of widespread gender stereotyping where the interviewer/interviewee relationship is also a subordinate/dominant one. This occurs because extracting information is more highly valued than yielding it. The feelings and the emotions of the interviewer do not exist whereas the interviewee may well be expected to reveal experiences and emotions of her own (Oakley, 1990).

Oakley argues that the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship, rather than standing back and being emotionally detached from the

proceedings. In her own interviews Oakley saw the interview as " a tool for making possible the articulated and recorded commentary of women on the very personal business of being female in a patriarchal capitalist society" (p49). In other words she sees the interviewer role as changing from" a data collecting instrument for researchers to being a data collecting instrument for those whose lives are being researched" (p49) ie a strategy for documenting women's own account of their lives.

As Jones (1984) points out, all research involves choices. These choices will depend on the research topic, on the particular type of data sought, on the research clients themselves and on constraints of time, energy and money. These choices should be made with an awareness of their implications for the kind of data that is likely to be obtained and that the practice of interviewing should be approached with a self conscious awareness of what we are doing, why and with what consequences.

4.9 The Research Process: Does an MBA help Women

Research on the 5 objectives outlined in Chapter One (section 1.4) led to the following research questions:

1. **What is the profile of the female MBA graduate and how does this differ from male MBA graduates and from women managers generally** (Objective One)

From the survey data and to a lesser extent from the interview data, profiles of male

and female MBA graduates were compared as were women MBAs with previous findings (eg Davidson, 1991; Coe, 1992) on women managers.

2 **What impact does the MBA have on male and female MBA graduates in the labour market** (Objective Three)

From the survey data, the present labour market position and career prospects of male and female MBAs were compared together with changes in terms of management function, management role and pay immediately before the MBA and currently (ie at least two years after completion of the course). This was integrated with findings from interviews on how men and women had experienced the benefits of the MBA.

3 **What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these career barriers impact on the careers, experiences and behaviours of female MBA graduates** (Objective Two)

From the survey data, the nature, importance and impact of career barriers on male and female MBAs were assessed and compared This was integrated with data from interviews on, in particular, women's experiences of barriers within the organisation.

4. **Does the MBA qualification reduce career barriers or the type of barriers experienced? To what extent does the MBA help women to overcome career barriers** (Objective Three and Five)

To ascertain what difference if any the MBA has on career barriers, female MBAs were compared with a sample of women managers from a previous study (Coe, 1992) . In addition, men and women were asked, in both the survey and in the course of interviews, to assess how the MBA had helped them overcome career barriers.

5. **How does tokenism impact on career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs** (Objective Four)

The female sample were divided into 'tokens' and 'non tokens' and the two sub-samples compared in terms of profile, labour market position and career barriers. Interviews produced data on how individual experiences of the organisation varied with gender mix.

4.9.1 The Two Stages

The research project followed two main stages. In stage 1 a postal survey was carried out of male and female MBA graduates in order to ascertain respective profiles and labour market positions and to provide a preliminary material to test Melamed's career success model that qualifications will have a greater impact on female than male careers. The postal survey also goes some way to examine further the organisation-structure's hypothesis that women's career development is a central function of organisational structures and the debate, within that same perspective, over the role of tokenism in women's career experiences.

In stage 2, interviews were conducted to explore the impact of career barriers on the experiences of male and, in particular, female MBA graduates. This would elaborate on all research questions but particularly questions 3,4 and 5.

4.9.2. Stage 1. The Questionnaire survey

Stage 1 required the gathering of a representative sample of male and female MBA graduates. A total of 553 questionnaires were sent to the eleven business schools who had agree to take part in the survey. Out of these, 221 were returned making a response rate of 39.9%. The sample comprised 130 male (59%) and 91 female (41%) MBA graduates who had studied for their qualification part time and who had been in the labour market for at least two years with their qualification at the time of the survey.

For reasons of consistency, part time MBA graduates were chosen. Characteristics of full time and part time MBA students vary considerably. Full time students are generally not working at the time of study and reenter the labour market after the completion of the course whereas part time MBA students are generally already in employment (AMBA, 1994). They would therefore tend to be older and to have had more work and management experience (AMBA, 1995). As far as mapping career progress subsequent to the course is concerned, it was felt that this could be most effectively achieved by following students who were in employment before during and after the course. In this way, changes subsequent to the course could more easily be identified. At the same time a greater proportion of MBAs take their qualification

part time as opposed to full time (AMBA, 1995) and on this basis part time MBAs may be seen as more representative of the recently qualified population.

Similarly, to allow time for the MBA to 'take effect' in terms of impacting on career progress, a minimum of two years in the labour market with the qualification was required. The majority of both men and women (91%) completed their MBA in 1990 or later. Only 11 out of 130 men completed before 1990 and the earliest completion date was 1986. Only 3 out of the 91 women completed before 1990 and the earliest completion date was 1987. The majority completed their MBA around 1992.

Finally, for the sample to be representative, MBA graduates were chosen from as wide a range of business schools as possible and from different parts of the country. Statistical tests were run on samples from the Open University and from the University of Edinburgh (see Appendix 4). These two institutions were chosen for their geographical difference, for their different modes of study (distance learning versus more traditional mode) and for the size of their samples (some business schools had too few respondents for statistical testing). With one exception, no significant difference emerged between the two samples on any of the tests. The one exception concerned pay before the MBA (women from the OU registered higher salary levels than women from Edinburgh) which possibly reflected regional pay differences. Differences were not, however, statistically significant after the MBA. Therefore, on the basis of a broad comparability between the two groups, it was concluded that the samples were likely to be fairly representative of the MBA population as a whole.

One problem was gaining access to details (names and addresses) of MBA graduates. The Association of MBAs (AMBA) was contacted to see if access to their membership of business schools and students was possible. The response here was negative, so individual letters were sent out to 40 heads of department of management or business schools of both old and new universities explaining the purpose of the survey and the requirement in terms of sample. Of these, 15 business schools either had no part time MBA provision or had students who did not yet satisfy the two year minimum requirement. Five further schools declined in writing to take part in the survey either on the grounds that heads of department were too busy or on the grounds that they felt their students had already been sufficiently researched and were in danger of suffering overload in this respect. A further nine gave no reply and eleven agreed to take part in the survey. These were Edinburgh Business School, the Open University, the University of Hertfordshire, Wolverhampton University, University of Kingston, University of Greenwich, Bradford University, Herriot Watt University, Middlesex University, University of Southampton and the University of Bristol.

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It was agreed that to protect ex students' confidentiality, questionnaires would be sent to the business schools who would then distribute them to individual students. This required a considerable effort on the part of business school personnel, so the low acceptance rate from the original 40 contacted was not surprising. The requisite number of questionnaires and introductory letters were packed up and sent in two stages (for administrative reasons) to the eleven business schools who then sent them out to their ex students. In this way names and addresses were kept confidential.

A second problem was obtaining a sufficiently large sample of women MBA graduates. From the first stage of questionnaires only 50 women MBAs were collated. This was later enhanced by further 30 returns from a second wave of replies.

In total 553 questionnaires were sent out to the eleven business schools and 221 replies were received - a response rate of 39.9%

4.9.2.1The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed out of the literature survey as outlined in Chapter Three and out of the pilot study which was carried out two months prior to the full survey. In the pilot survey, eight questionnaires were given to MBA graduates from the University of North London Business school. These were either ex students (who did not yet satisfy the two year labour market requirement and who could not therefore take part in the full survey) or were staff members with an MBA. Respondents were asked to comment on the questionnaire as a whole and on individual questions. As a result several questions were omitted in the final survey in order to reduce the size of the questionnaire and where potential duplication of data was evident. Some questions were changed for reasons of clarity.

The questionnaire was refined and the final version, which included an introductory letter on the front cover, was sent out and can be found in Appendix One. A prepaid envelope was included. To avoid overloading the goodwill of the business schools

concerned it was not possible to send out a letter of reminder to those who had not returned the questionnaire after a certain interval. This may well have reduced the potential response rate.

The questionnaire comprised 33 questions and was divided into three sections.

The first section , **About You**, aimed to gather information on the profile of the MBA graduate in terms of age, qualifications, marital status, children and the impact of children on careers.

The second section, **Your Employment and the MBA**, sought information concerning the labour market position of MBA graduates both before and after the qualification. This covered job title; organisational activity, sector and size; management function, role and salary before and after the MBA; and tokenism. In addition this section asked for information on promotions, career progress, prospects, whether the respondent felt the MBA had helped in their careers as well as their motives for taking the MBA.

The final section, **MBA Graduates and Career Barriers**, required information on barriers experienced. Respondents were asked to identify from a list of eleven possible barriers which ones, if any, they had experienced in their careers to date. They were also asked to identify from the same list the largest single barrier encountered. Although not directly related to the questions in this thesis, respondents were also asked to identify pressures experienced and the largest single pressure. Job

pressures may well be affected by career barriers and/or vice versa so it was felt that the outcome could provide valuable supplementary data through cross referencing. Two other questions covered the extent to which respondents felt the MBA had helped to overcome career barriers and the overall attitude of their organisation to women managers.

4.9.2.2 Problems encountered with the Questionnaire

One problem was a failure to precode the questionnaire at the design stage. This meant that coding had to take place after the survey was completed which proved to be extremely time consuming. Although it did not necessarily have any effect on the final outcome, it is possible that several questions would have been modified to take into account the need for easy coding.

Secondly, some questions failed to discriminate sufficiently between different groups of respondents. For example, question 16 sought to gain information on the gender mix of the organisation at senior levels. Not only did this question prove confusing in that respondents were unsure as to how many of their superior managers to include (many respondents omitted this question altogether) but also the outcome was non discriminatory in that the vast majority (71.7%) of respondents had a gender imbalance at senior levels with men by far outnumbering women. The information gathered therefore was of little significance as the numbers who worked in organisations with an even gender mix at senior levels was too small for statistical testing or for valid inferences to be made. Similar problems emerged with question

27 in which respondents were asked to identify from five options, those aspects of work and home which they considered to be "very important", "important" or "unimportant". This was to ascertain whether and to what extent there were differences between men and women in terms of attitudes to careers. As any number of options could be chosen, many respondents claimed all five to be " very important", again making it difficult to discriminate between different groups. Requiring respondents to rank the five options in order of importance would have partly overcome this problem. However, a second problem was the potential non neutrality of the option ("salary and status") and a possible reluctance on the part of some respondents to identify such instrumental factors as high priorities.

Thirdly, in order to capture as much detail as possible, some questions contained too many categories. For example, question 13 on organisational activity had ten categories and question 17 on management function had thirteen categories. This created a problem in terms of analysis as each category contained too few numbers for statistical testing. In some cases, categories could be merged together (as in question 18 on management role when the four categories of Chair/Chief Executive, Director/Partner, Non Executive Director and Senior Manager could be merged into a new category of Senior Roles). However, in the case of question 13 and 17 there was no obvious way to do this without distorting the results.

4.9.2.3 Data Analysis

In terms of the level of analysis, data was mainly nominal. This, together with the

small size of certain sub samples on which tests were to be run, meant that non parametric statistical techniques were appropriate. As two groups were involved in much of the analysis (eg male/female; public sector/private sector; token/non token) the two sample chi square test was used as the appropriate test for comparing two groups on a nominal scale (Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch, 1997). This is based on a comparison of observed versus expected frequencies and the null hypothesis tested by the two sample chi square is that no difference exists between the two groups with respect to the relative frequency with which group members fall into the various categories. The p value with its associated cut off points at 10% ($p<0.10$), 5% ($p<0.05$) and 1% ($p<0.01$) indicate the existence of significant differences between the two groups. This test is valid as long as no more than 20% of the cells have expected frequencies of less than 5 and no cell has an expected frequency of less than 1. If this does occur, categories can be merged so as to reduce the number of cells in the contingency table. Some merging of categories did take place for this reason. Where chi square testing could not take place because of the above requirement and where categories could not be merged, descriptive statistics in the form of proportions or percentages were used.

Questions and responses were coded and results were transferred onto a data base. Analysis of data involved using the social science statistical package SPSS. This allowed relatively easy and quick comparisons to be made through cross tabulations as well as tests of significance using chi square discussed above. Comparisons included gender, industrial sector (public/private) , size of employing organisation, management level, original business schools where MBA was studied, age, marital

status and tokenism.

Tokenism (question 15)

Of the various comparisons made, 'tokenism' deserves further discussion and clarification. In the second section of the questionnaire under the heading "Your Employment and the MBA", question 15 required participants to indicate the number of men and women who work at the same or similar level to themselves within their organisations and with whom they have day to day or regular working contact. It was not necessary to include the gender mix at more senior levels to the respondents as this was covered by the next question (question 16). At the same time it was necessary to exclude groups of single sex occupations within an organisation which were lower down the hierarchy and which may otherwise have distorted the figures, such as secretaries who are mainly female or technicians who may be mainly male. In the NHS, for example, the gender mix of a hospital may have a greater female:male ratio because of the large numbers of women in nursing or administrative occupations. This gender mix, however, may not necessarily be reflected in the key decision making posts further up the hierarchy. Therefore, to gain a true picture of numerical distribution at managerial level and of its potential impact, the questionnaire concentrated solely on the gender mix at the same or similar management level to the respondents themselves. For easier calculation on the part of respondents (who might otherwise be unsure as to which groups within their organisation to include) and to confine the data to respondents' immediate working environment, the corollary " managers with whom you have day to day or

regular working contact" was added.

The resulting ratios were then broken down and those women who formed 20% or less of the total at the same or similar levels to themselves within their organisation were categorised as 'tokens'. Those women who comprised over 20% of the total were resultantly categorised as 'non tokens'. The dividing line at 20% was chosen because it accorded approximately with Kanter's (1977) definition of a "skewed group" in which the male to female ratio was considered to be at least 85:15.

Accordingly, token women were identified as those who worked in organisations where they formed 20% or less of the total. The total could refer to a section, department or the whole organisation, the key factor being that the total comprises those employees at the same level as the women concerned with whom they have regular or day to day working contact. Tokens, therefore, were very much in the minority in their working group. Non tokens, on the other hand, were defined as those women who formed more than 20% of the total so that the gender mix was more balanced. They could, however, still be in the minority but their minority status was not so great.

Senior Levels (question 16)

Question 16 concerned the gender mix of managers more senior to the respondents themselves. As discussed in the previous section , one problem that emerged here was lack of discrimination as nearly the whole female sample (71.7%) worked in

organisations that were male dominated at senior levels. A further 12.1% worked in organisations where senior personnel were evenly mixed and only 3% in organisations where there were more women than men at these levels. The question was included for two reasons. Firstly, it was felt that it would give useful additional information on tokenism and could therefore supplement question 15. Secondly, the results would help to assess Ely's (1994) view that it is tokenism at the top that is a key factor determining women's experiences, rather than tokenism further down the hierarchy. Three groups were initially identified, based on the 20% dividing line used in the previous question but with a third group which comprised organisations where equal numbers of men and women were at the top together with organisations where women outnumbered men. The first group, where women at the top comprised 20% or less of the total, was labelled "heavily outnumbered". The second group where women at the top comprised more than 20% was labelled "outnumbered". The third group where the gender mix was equal or female dominated was too small for statistical testing.

Tests run on this data produced inconclusive evidence on differences between the two groups and the use of the two categories was abandoned. Question 15 seemed to capture the essence of tokenism more successfully (interesting differences emerged here) so only the categories of 'token' and 'non token' were used. In addition, as a large proportion of the MBA sample were at or near senior management levels (42.4% at senior levels and 36.5% at middle management level) it was felt that question 15 would incorporate a strong element of tokenism at the top without need for a further category.

4.9.3 Stage 2

4.9.3.1 Interviewing

Stage two of the research project involved qualitative analysis in the form of interviews. Interviews were conducted with a total of 23 participants, 16 women and 7 men. Women MBAs came from different organisational sectors and activities and the number of women included in the interview sample was large enough for certain categories to be identified. The relatively small number of men interviewed did not allow such categorisation to take place. However, while acknowledging the need, identified by Morgan (1990) to "bring men into the inquiry" in this stage as well as in stage one of the research project, it was felt that there was little to be gained by including more men in the sample. This decision was taken for three reasons. Firstly, the main focus in this stage of the research project was on women and their experiences of the organisation. Secondly, while it was interesting to explore how men's experiences differed, there were few points of comparison between the two samples so that it was felt that interviewing more men would add little to the data already gathered. Thirdly, certain difficulties were experienced in the course of interviewing the male sample (discussed later in this section) which meant that the quality of data was generally poor in that it was either superficial in nature or it fell outside the immediate concerns of this research project.

Each respondent from stage 1 of the research process was invited to supply name and telephone number if they were willing to take part in a further study. Approximately

a third of respondents supplied their names and numbers. Interviewees were then chosen mainly on the grounds of accessibility so that the sample comprised MBA graduates from London and the South East. However, as 59% of MBAs are located in this area (AMBA, 1995) the sample was not considered to be wholly unrepresentative. Each interview was recorded and then fully transcribed in preparation for analysis using the NUDIST software package.

Interviews were conducted over a six month period. Interviews were conducted on a face to face basis mostly at the respondents' work place. One female and one male interviewee, for reasons of their own convenience, preferred to be interviewed in the researcher's office. Generally however, it was felt that not only would it be considerably more convenient for the interviewees to be seen at their own workplace, (who might otherwise not be able to spare time for interviews) but it would give a useful insight into the context of the organisation for which respondents worked.

Two interviews were conducted over the telephone, again for reasons of convenience of the respondents. This was not successful. Interviews could not be recorded and the depth of data was affected by the fact that notes had to be taken at the time of the telephone call and immediately afterwards. Some data was therefore lost. Although the two telephone interviews are included in the research this method of inquiry was not repeated.

Interviews were used to explore the nature of the experiences of individual men and women within the organisation and to assess the extent to which commonalities

occurred in the different realities experienced. The main focus of the interviews was firstly on the MBA and its perceived impact on career progress and secondly on career barriers, how these barriers have manifested themselves and been experienced and on how women and men have attempted to accommodate these experiences. The outcome of the interviews took different paths and elicited different themes though the subject matter and the types of issues discussed were common to all. After a brief introduction, reassurance of confidentiality and permission to tape record the interview, the following broad topics were covered:

1. Experience of the MBA course: reasons for taking the course and how and to what extent the MBA has helped career progress.

2. Career progress to date.

3. Impact of MBA on working relations: reaction of colleagues and line managers to new MBA status

4. Career barriers - what types of barriers, examples, specific occasions in which barriers became manifest, feelings surrounding experiences of barriers.

5. The gender mix and the culture of employing organisations eg supportive or other wise, degree of networking/friendships that take place, how decisions are made, comparisons with other organisations

6. Strategies to overcome barriers

7. Main problems experienced as a manager: examples, incidents

8. Main problems, if any, experienced by women managers in the organisation

9. Future prospects/plans

(The interview guide and list of questions is to be found in Appendix Seven).

To avoid the possibility of a masculine paradigm emerging in the interviewing process via structured or open ended questions posed by a detached researcher, interviews followed no pre arranged format except insofar as the above broad issues for discussion (using a series of prompts) were common to all. As far as possible the researcher engaged actively in the interview process by forging a relationship with the interviewee and by not concentrating solely on the eliciting of information. The flow of information and disclosure was a two way process. Reliance was placed on how men and women themselves interpret their own experiences and these interpretations were counted as a valid source of knowledge. The length of interviews varied though the average time spent in each case was approximately 45 minutes.

Although the interviews in general went smoothly, with interviewees being interested in the subject and keen to take part in the study, several problems did

emerge. While all managers were able to reflect on the impact of their MBA qualification and on their career progress (this discussion took place early on in the interview and acted as an important 'warm up'), some managers found it more difficult than others to explore the nature of career barriers and the nature of their organisational culture in terms of how it affected their working lives. For those who found difficulty in this respect, considerable patience was required and the researcher developed skills in terms of knowing when to stay silent and when to prompt as this part of the research process progressed. Other managers, especially in the early phase of interviewing, talked too much on topics that were of marginal interest to the project (eg detailed accounts of problems faced by their organisation) and, again, the researcher became adept at moving interviewees on to more relevant topics as the research process progressed.

Generally, the above problems were encountered with male interviewees rather than female. Men were more reluctant to talk about their feelings and had difficulty with the more in depth questions perhaps reflecting differences in male and female styles of speaking (Tannen, 1991). Answers were often extremely short (even monosyllabic) so that frequent prompting was required. Alternatively, men talked at great length on aspects of their own careers which was not directly relevant to the inquiry. These problems could reflect the fact that the researcher was female and therefore perhaps more in tune with female interviewees (and vice versa) than male.

4.9.3.2 Using Framework Analysis

The five key stages recommended by Framework analysis starts with a process of *familiarisation* and the acquisition of an overview of the data. To this effect, tape recorded interviews were transcribed in full by the researcher as soon as possible after the interview had taken place. The software package NUDIST (Non Numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising) was used to help in the analysis of data and interviews were transferred from the original word processing package onto NUDIST. Transcriptions were then converted into NUDIST raw files and introduced as document texts for analysis.

The process of transcription enabled familiarisation with the data to take place and generated some valuable ideas about how the data might be coded and analysed. The latter relates to the next stage, *identifying a thematic framework* in which key themes and concepts are identified with which to examine and reference the data. Within NUDIST single line text units were chosen for analysis in order to achieve a high density of coding. This meant that coding could take place on a line by line basis as opposed to larger segments of text (larger text units run the danger of overlooking important details). Frequent overlapping of codes occurred ie the same text units could be coded under more than one category. The codes used to analyse the content of qualitative interviews were stored in a tree-shaped index system which could be modified and adapted as new codes were developed or as some codes were discarded or merged. Each code employed in the analysis of the data becomes a "node" in the NUDIST system, that is a branch of the tree. Every node had its own NUDIST

"address" in the index system, which meant that specific coding categories could be accessed quickly and cross referenced with other coding categories if required. Consequently, NUDIST aids data analysis in that it encourages the generation of general categories of ideas whilst the coding index is being constructed. However, while the computer program can play a support role by facilitating the process, it cannot replace research. As Richards and Richards, the developers of NUDIST say, "the task of theory discovery remains for the human researchers" (Richards & Richards, 1994).

Ten initial themes were identified, some of which were then subdivided further as coding progressed, so that 28 nodes in total were created (the NUDIST tree is reproduced in Appendix Five). Once these broad themes and subthememes were identified and printed out using NUDIST software, further divisions or categories to emerge were highlighted on the hard copy using different coloured marker pens.

Some of these categories were straightforward and descriptive. For example, after all text units relating to benefits from the MBA were coded and printed (node 9.1.1) six subcategories subsequently emerged (discussed in Chapter Six, section 6.6) which were later classified as 'intrinsic' career benefits. This process, whereby categories are applied systematically to the text, is known as *indexing*. A more complex theme concerned career barriers (node 6) which covered a wide range of experiences. This category was subdivided into formal (node 6.1) and informal (node 6.2) barriers to capture those 'hidden' barriers located within the organisation's culture and practices. Because of its importance to the inquiry, a

separate theme, the Men's Club (node 4.1.1) incorporated data that referred to feelings/experiences of exclusion or marginalisation and where subthemes of visibility (node 4.1.2) and feelings of separateness (node 4.1.3) were created.

Coding was to some extent aided by the process of *charting* whereby a range of experiences within a theme are identified. This allowed, within the theme of the mens' club for example, for oblique (more benign) as well as overt (more hostile) resistance to be identified and for links to be made between such resistance and the gender mix of organisations. This dichotomy (oblique and overt resistance) is discussed in Chapter Eight (sections 8.4.2 - 8.4.3). Similarly, under the broad theme of 'culture' a range of experiences were identified which led to the typology of 'good', 'partial' and 'poor' organisational fit . This is discussed in Chapter Eight (section 8.2.2).

Finally, the process of *mapping and interpretation* allowed themes, typologies and concepts to be integrated into the research question: Does an MBA help women? This led ultimately to the conclusion that men and women benefit from the MBA in different ways in terms of extrinsic and intrinsic factors and that despite the MBA women are subject to 'hidden' career barriers that are located in the organisation and its structure.

Results of this data analysis were then compared and, wherever possible, integrated with findings from the survey data. This was done on a topic by topic basis, so that, for example, results from questions 8 and 9 on the questionnaire which relate to

numbers of children (8) and the impact of caring responsibilities (9) were compared with discussions from the interviews of family circumstances and their potential impact and where possible were integrated. A similar process occurred for data on the importance attached to the MBA as a career asset and on career barriers. While in some cases such comparison and integration produced consistent results, in others results were inconsistent. This is discussed more fully in Chapters Nine and Ten. Examples of coding of transcripts are to be found in Appendix Eight.

4.10 Presentation of Findings

The following four chapters discuss the findings of this research. As discussed in the section above, the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data need to be integrated as much as possible. This is necessary to develop an overall picture of women MBAs and their career progress. However, it was felt that in the initial stage of presentation, that these findings would have more structure and would be easier to follow if they were set out separately. Once the results had been outlined in this way, the second stage would be to compare and to integrate them.

The four chapter are organised around the two research propositions and the six research questions outlined in Chapter One section 1.2 and in the current chapter, sections 4.1 and 4.9. Chapters Five and Six address proposition one and research questions one and two. Chapter Five comprises quantitative data while Chapter Six comprises qualitative data. Chapters Seven and Eight address proposition 2 and research questions 3 - 6. Chapter Seven comprises quantitative data while Chapter

Eight incorporates the results of the interviews. In Chapter Nine the two sets of data are integrated and discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROFILE OF THE MBA GRADUATE AND THE IMPACT OF THE MBA ON CAREER PROGRESS: QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.1 Introduction

Chapters Five to Eight test the two research propositions outlined in Chapter One namely:

Proposition 1

The MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men

Proposition 2

Despite the MBA women managers face barriers to career progression that are located within the organisation, its structures and processes.

In presenting the research findings, Chapters Five to Eight answer in different degrees the five questions as set out in Chapter One, namely:

1. What is the profile of the female MBA graduate and how does this differ

from the male MBA graduate and from women managers generally.

2. What impact does the MBA have on male and female MBA graduates in the labour market

3. What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these barriers impact on the careers, experiences and behaviours.

4. To what extent does the MBA help women overcome career barriers

5 What are the implications of tokenism for career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs

These questions are related to the 5 objectives outlined in Chapter One and to the two research propositions above. Chapters Five (quantitative data) and Six (qualitative data) address Proposition 1 and research questions one and two. Chapters Seven (quantitative) and Eight (qualitative) address Proposition 2 and research questions 3, 4 and 5. In Chapter Nine, the two sets of data are integrated and discussed.

This chapter therefore focuses on Proposition 1. It presents the findings of the survey and concentrates on the respective profile and the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates and addresses questions 1 and 2. Some comparison is made

pre and post MBA to assess changes in career progress.

Question One

What is the profile of the female MBA graduate and how does this differ from the male MBA graduate and from the woman manager generally.

5.2 Personal Profile of MBA Graduates

5.2.1. Age

Women in this sample were on average slightly younger than the men. Just over a third (35.4%) of women were aged 34 or under at the time of the survey compared with 23.5% of men. Proportionately more men were to be found in the 45 - 54 age category. However, approximately a half of both men and women were in the 35 - 44 age category - the standard age for embarking on an MBA course. Differences in age were not statistically significant. (Appendix 2, Table). Some sectoral difference emerged with age. Women in the private sector were younger than those in the public sector and younger than men irrespective of sector. For example, 59.5% of private sector women came into the younger (under 35) age group whereas only 13.7% of public sector women, 28.3% of private sector men and 10% of public sector men came into this category. Gender differences in terms of age were significant in the private sector at 1% level (Appendix 2, Table 2).

5.2.2 Qualification

Women were also slightly better qualified: 88% had a bachelors or masters degree prior to the course compared with 79% of men. Slightly more women (10.9%) had a masters degree compared to 5.4% of men. Women were also more likely to have a postgraduate diploma such as a PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) or a DMS (Diploma in Management Studies) although proportionately more men had a professional qualification . Differences in qualification levels, however, are not statistically significant (Appendix 2, Table 3). Significant differences did emerge between men and women in terms of academic background as indicated by degree subject.

5.2.3 Degree Subject

Significant differences at 1% emerged in terms of degree subject as can be seen from the table below (Table 5.1). Over two thirds of men in the sample had a background in Science or Engineering compared to 40.2% of the women. By contrast, just under 60% of women had a background in Arts, Social Science or Humanities.

Table 5.1: MBA Graduates and Academic Background

	Women %	Men %
Arts	23.2	10.5
Science	37.8	49.1
Social Science/Humanities	36.6	20.2
Engineering	2.4	20.2
N	82	114

P=0.00005
Chi square: 22.70994

5.2.4 Marriage and Family

Highly significant differences emerged at the 1% level in terms of marital status and parenthood. The overwhelming majority (91.2%) of men in the sample were married and two thirds (67.4%) had at least one dependent child (defined as a child under 18 years of age). Women were more likely to be single and less likely to have children than their male counterparts - 71.7% were married and 24.2% were single. Only 36.4% of women had at least one dependent child (Appendix 2, Tables 4 and 5). These differences in parenthood did not disappear when the married sample was isolated. Nearly three quarters of married men had at least one dependent child compared with only 49.3% of married women (Appendix 2, Table 6).

Table 5.2 Caring Responsibilities and Impact on Career

	Women %	Men%
Adverse Effect	20.9	6.9
Beneficial Effect	3.3	3.8
No Effect	7.7	31.5
Don't Know	4.4	6.2
No Caring Responsibility	63.7	51.5
N =	91	130

P= 0.00000
Chi square: 24.00118

A higher proportion of women (63.7%) than men (50.5%) claimed to have no caring responsibility. In the case of women this tallies with the two thirds of women from the sample who are childless. In other words the vast majority of women with children claimed to have a caring responsibility. For men, however, no such tally occurs. Two thirds of men have at least one dependant and yet a half claimed to have no caring responsibility. In fact, nearly a third (30%) of the men with at least one dependent child made such a claim, compared to only 6.1% of women (Appendix 2, Table 7). The higher male figure here may reflect a narrower interpretation of the term "caring responsibility" (ie undertaking regular day time care) or it may simply reflect an attitude that sees the responsibility for child care as ultimately their partner's and not their own. The responsibility that women take on in this respect is reflected in figures on the effects of caring on careers. Of those women with children over a half (51.5%) felt that having a child had adversely affected their careers. Only 8.1% of men with children expressed the same belief and 44.2% felt that having children had not affected their career in any way. This compares with 21.2% of

women. This suggests that the division of labour within the household may have changed little over the years and that many women carry the dual burden of family and work responsibilities. In terms of age, older women were more likely to feel that a caring responsibility had an adverse effect though, not surprisingly, younger women were more likely to claim no caring responsibility (74.2%) than older women (58.3%) (Appendix 2, Table 8). In both age categories (under and over 35) gender differences were significant at the 1% level.

5.3. MBA Graduates at work

5.3.1 Organisational Sector

Several differences emerged between men and women in terms of the type of employing organisation. Over a half of women worked in the public sector (53.4%) compared to only 20.2% of men. On the other hand just over two thirds of men (67.4%) worked in a private sector public company compared to 29.5% of women. Small but fairly equal numbers of both groups worked in the voluntary sector, in partnerships or were self employed.

Table 5.3a Male and Female MBAs by Organisational Sector

	Women %	Men %
Public Sector	53.4	20.2
Partnership	5.7	4.7
Sole Trader	6.8	4.7
Public Company	29.5	67.4
Charity	4.5	3.1
N	88	129

P=0.00000
Cells with expected frequency <5: 40%
Chi square value: 32.4274

However, as 40% of the cells had an expected frequency of less than 5, the results in terms of statistical significance must be treated with caution. The high chi square value indicates that despite this, the difference is a large one. To facilitate statistical testing, categories were collapsed into two: the public / charitable sector formed one category (numbers in the charitable sector were low and it felt that this sector had more in common in terms of experience of work with the public sector than the private sector); partnership, sole trader and public company formed the second category which became the Private Sector. Highly significant differences emerged between the two sectors:

Table 5.3b: Male and Female MBAs by Organisational Sector

	Women %	Men %
Public/charitable sector	58.0	23.2
Private sector	42.0	76.7
N	88	129

P=0.00000
Chi value: 26.92374

Various differences emerged between men and women in the public and private sectors. Employees tended to be younger in the private sector and this is particularly the case for women. For example in this sector, 59.5% of women and 27.3% of men came into the younger 25-34 age bracket compared to only 13.7% women and only 10% of men in the public sector. This also conforms to earlier findings concerning the younger age of women MBAs though the difference appears to become greater when one looks at the private sector alone. For example, at the other end of the scale 21.2% of private sector men are in the 45-54 age bracket compared to only 10.8% of women (Appendix 2, Table 9)

Perhaps as a reflection of their younger age bracket, private sector women were less likely to be married (62.2%) than their public sector counterparts (74.3%) and women MBA graduates generally (71.7%). This compares to nine out of ten men in both sectors (Appendix 2, Table 10) However, women in the private sector were more likely to have children than women in the public sector. The opposite was true for men. (Appendix 2, Table 11).

5.3.2 Activity

Several differences emerged between men and women in terms of the main organisational activity. Statistical testing was not possible, however, because the large number of categories meant that figures in each cell were low and the maximum 20% criteria in terms of expected cell frequency was not satisfied. The diverse nature of the categories meant that there was no easy way to merge categories together. Despite this, certain concentrations are worth noting.

Table 5.4 Organisational Activity

	Women %	Men %
Manufacturing/Production	5.5	28.5
Leisure	2.2	0.8
Utilities	5.5	6.9
Financial Services	7.7	25.4
Retail/Distribution/Transport	3.3	3.1
Marketing/Sales/Advertising	4.4	0.8
Construction/Engineering	0	3.8
Education/Training	27.5	8.5
Professional/Scientific/Consultancy	8.8	13.8
Other Services	35.2	8.5
N	91	130

P= 0.0000
Cells with expected frequency <5: 40%

Firstly, women tend to be concentrated into two main areas. Over third (35.6%) were in Other Services compared to only 8.5% of men. The next most popular

activity for women was Education and Training at 26.7% compared to 8.5% for men. The remaining women were spread fairly evenly but thinly across the other activities, although, not surprisingly, there were no women in Construction/Engineering. A similar breakdown emerged in Coe's IM study with 22% of women managers in Education/Training though a much smaller figure (19%) were registered in Other Services. This disparity may be partly accounted for by a higher proportion (14%) in Professional/ Scientific/Consultancy which, again, may reflect the differences in seniority and sector between the two samples.

Secondly, men tend to be concentrated into three main areas: Manufacturing and Production (28.5%), Financial Services (25.4%) and Professional/Scientific/Consultancy (13.8%). Women scored considerably lower figures in each case - 5.6%, 7.8% and 8.9% respectively.

This conforms with figures for the population generally. As Chapter 2 (section 2.2) pointed out, the representation of women in the workforce varies greatly among industries. Women are more likely to be found in service industries, especially in the public sector, whereas men are over represented in private manufacturing industry (Labour Force Survey, 1996). Figures from this survey conforms with these more general trends. At the time of the survey, women in the public sector were working largely in services with 33.3% in Education and 52.9% in Other Services, reflecting the bias in the public sector towards service provision. Women in the private sector were more dispersed. The highest concentrations (16.2%) were in Financial Services, with the next largest concentrations (13.5%) in Other Services,

Manufacturing/Production, Education/Training and Professional/Scientific/Consultancy.

As with women, men in the public sector were also concentrated in Education (36.7% and 33.3% respectively). The next highest concentrations for men in this sector were in Professional/Scientific/Consultancy and Other Services, both at 20.0%. In the private sector, men were concentrated in Manufacturing and Financial Services (34.3% and 32.3% respectively) with a thin dispersion between the other activities. Public sector women, therefore , where the majority of women are located and private sector men, where the majority of men are located, have heavy concentrations in two or three activities which themselves account for the difference in proportions between the two sectors (Appendix 2, Table 12).

5.3.3 Full or Part time

No differences emerged between men and women or between sectors in terms of work pattern. Well over 90% of both men and women were working full time so the number of part time workers in each case is negligible. This may be particularly significant for women workers who traditionally prefer part time work and for whom differences in pay or conditions are often put down to their part time status. Female MBA graduates, however, are overwhelmingly full time workers and such considerations do not apply (Appendix 2, Table 13)

5.3.4 Size of Company

Similarly, no significant differences emerged in terms of size of employing organisation. Approximately a half of both men (50%) and women (48.9%) were working in organisations with over 1,000 employees at the time of the survey. One quarter of men and a fifth of women were working in organisations with 101-1,000 employees (Appendix 2, Table 14). These figures did not alter significantly in a breakdown by sector, nor did they differ generally from figures from Coe's study.

5.3.5 Attitude to Work and Family

Research suggests that men and women have different attitudes to work with women ranking salary and status less highly and job satisfaction and working relations more highly then men (eg Scase and Goffee, 1989; Chapman, 1989; Marshall, 1984;1992). This was not wholly borne out by the data from this survey. While a higher proportion of women (60.4%) than men (48.5%) claimed working relations to be important, supporting previous research, the figures for job satisfaction were high for both men and women with only slightly more women seeing this as very important - 91.2% of women compared to 88.5% of men (Appendix 2, Table 15). Working relations were more important to both men and women in the public sector than in the private sector (Appendix 2, Tables 16 and 17).

Significant differences at the 1% level emerged in the importance attached to marriage/partner and to children with more men in both cases claiming them to be

very important. This, however, is not surprising considering the higher number of men in the sample who were married and with at least one dependent child. Taking the married sample alone reversed the relationship so that a slightly higher percentage of women (92.2%) rated marriage /partner as very important compared with 89.8% of married men. More married men (72%) saw children as important compared to just over a half (53.1%) of married women though this difference largely disappears when only those with children are compared. The overwhelming majority of both men and women with children (87.9% and 93.0% respectively) felt their children were very important (Appendix 2, Table 15).

In terms of age, higher proportions of younger men and women than older men and women rated all factors except children as important. This one exception, which was more popular among the older age group, probably reflects the fact that they are more likely to have children. Whatever the age group, men are more likely to rate salary and status as important and women to rate working relations (Appendix 2, Table 18).

Although some interesting findings emerged from this question concerning respondents' priorities in their careers, certain difficulties were experienced as discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.9.2.2). The main problem concerned a lack of discrimination in that respondents were allowed to choose any number of the five options given as "very important", "important" and "unimportant". Consequently a large number chose all five options as "very important" making it difficult to discriminate between different groups. Asking respondents to choose one option

under each heading may have helped overcome this problem and the results would have been more powerful in assessing how men and women differ in terms of attitudes to careers.

However, what has emerged is some conformity between the sexes in terms of attitude to marriage and family, especially when the married sample and/or those with children are isolated. On the other hand, a difference has emerged between men and women in terms of importance attached to working relationships with women tending to rate this more highly and to salary and status which men tend to rate as important. This conforms to earlier research though differences in this study are not statistically significant.

5.4 Summary (Question 1)

What is the profile of the female MBA graduate and how does this differ from the male MBA graduate and from women managers generally.

So far the profile of the female MBA graduate conforms largely to findings on women managers generally. She is younger than her male counterpart, is more likely to be single and without children. Consequently, she is less likely than men to claim a caring responsibility. However, whereas a third of men with children claim no caring responsibility, few women with children came into this category. At the same time women are more likely to see such responsibilities as damaging to her career. At work, the female MBA graduate, as with the woman manager generally, tends to

be a public sector worker, to be in education or other services and to work full time in medium sized or large organisations. Men on the other hand tend to work in the private sector and to be in Manufacturing/Production, Financial Services or Consultancy with no difference in size of employing organisation. Women in the private sector are younger and less likely to be married than men in that sector and than women MBAs generally. They are more dispersed than public sector women in terms of organisational activity, with the latter highly concentrated in Education and Training and Other Services. In terms of attitude to work and family, little difference emerged between men and women , though there is some evidence to suggest that women rate working relationships more highly than men.

Question 2

What impact does the MBA have on male and female MBA graduates in the labour market

5.5 Labour Market Position of MBAs

Part of the profile of male and female MBA graduates involves a description of their management function and management role. As the above question concerns the labour market position of respondents, there is inevitably some overlap between questions 1 and 2. To avoid duplication of data, results on changes in function and role will be considered in this section, as will pay differentials, job changes and attitude to the MBA as a career advancer.

5.5.1 Management Function

Question 17 on the questionnaire required respondents to indicate their management function before and after the MBA. As Chapter Four (section 4.9.2.2) pointed out, an attempt to "capture" as much detail as possible meant that the number of categories was too large (and absolute figures in each cell correspondingly small) which led to problems in terms of statistical testing. However, some interesting trends and differences emerged.

Table 5.5: Management Function before and after MBA

	Women %		Men %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Administration	13.8	7.0	8.6	4.8
Management Services	5.0	4.7	5.2	3.2
Finance/Accounting	7.5	1.2	14.7	4.8
Education/training	16.3	15.1	6.0	6.5
Personnel	6.3	3.5	0	0.8
Production/Manufacturing	3.8	1.2	18.1	12.1
Computing/IT	8.8	5.8	12.1	6.5
Development/Strategic	3.8	14.0	5.2	8.1
Marketing/Sales	5.0	4.7	14.7	15.1
Purchasing/Contracting	3.8	2.3	0	2.4
Corporate Affairs	1.3	2.3	0	0
Management Consultancy	5.0	14.0	0.8	6.5
General Management	20.0	24.4	14.7	30.6
N	80	80	116	124

As in previous studies on women managers, (Rycroft, 1989; Coe, 1992) women MBAs were more likely than men to be in support functions such as Administration and Personnel or in Education/ Training. This is especially the case before the MBA though the figure for Personnel was relatively low at 6.3%. Before the MBA, 13.8% of women were in Administration compared to 8.6% of men and 16.3% of women were in Education/Training compared to only 6.0% of men. In all three areas figures fell after the MBA. This is especially the case with Administration with a fall for women from 13.8% to 7.0%. One fifth of women described themselves as being in

General Management before the MBA (in the private sector this figure was lower at 11.8%). This compares with an overall figure of 14.7% of men in General Management, again with a smaller proportion (11.2%) in the private sector. In fact in percentage terms, twice as many men and women were in General Management in the public sector (26.9% and 23.3% respectively) than the private sector suggesting either more specialist areas in the private sector and/or more senior managers in the public sector (Appendix 2, Table 19).

Some difference emerged in terms of the change in functions post MBA with women tending to move out of support functions and men out of specialist functions into senior management. The largest downward change for women was a move out of Administration (- 6.8%) closely followed by Finance/Accounting (-6.3%). This trend in Administration was particularly marked in the public sector where figures fell from 18.6% to 8.5%. For men the largest change was out of Finance/Accounting with a fall of 9.9% followed by Production/Manufacturing (- 6.0%) and then Computing/IT (- 5.6%). With the exception of Production/Manufacturing, private sector women follow a similar pattern to men with large downward changes in Finance (14.7% - 2.8%) and IT (14.7% - 8.3%).

The pattern of change in functions is broadly the same for men and women. Both groups registered a move post MBA into General Management, Management Consultancy and Development/Strategic functions, associated with more senior and/or more independent functions. In General Management, women start from a higher base of 20% compared to the equivalent figure for men of 14.7% . However,

they experience a smaller swing post MBA ending up with a lower figure of 24.4% compared to 30.6% for men. There is little difference between the two main sectors for women in terms of change though, as mentioned earlier, a higher proportion of women in General Management are in the public sector. Men, therefore, experience a considerably larger change into General Management post MBA than do women and this trend is the same for both the public and the private sectors (Appendix 2, Table 20).

This picture changes somewhat if one takes the categories General Management and Development/Strategic together. This would be appropriate on the grounds of a possible overlap between the two. For example a general manager may well have a developmental or strategic role and there could have been some difficulty on the part of respondents in separating out these two functions and choosing between them. For this reason, a more accurate picture of change into senior positions might be to merge these two functions together in which case gender differences in terms of senior positions before and after the MBA largely disappear.

Table 5.6: Development/Strategic and General Management Functions Before and After MBA.

	Women %		Men %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Development/Strategic	3.8	14.0	5.2	8.1
General Management	20.0	24.4	14.7	30.6
Total	23.8	38.0	19.9	38.7

Women, again, start from a slightly higher base but similar proportions of men (38.7%) and women (38.0%) occupied senior functions after the MBA. When figures are broken down by sector, however, some differences emerge. The largest change in terms of movement into the above functions occurs for private sector men (15.7% - 36.6%) while the smallest change occurs for public sector men (34.6% - 46.6%), though as the figures indicate, a higher proportion of public sector men appear in these two categories. In the case of women, a higher proportion of public sector women appear in these two categories (28% before the MBA compared to 14.7% of women in the private sector) and the swing into General Management and Development/Strategic is greater in the public sector to reach 48.9% with a lower figure of 27.8% for the private sector. Women therefore are at a disadvantage in the private sector before and after the MBA in terms of their representation in the General Management and Development/Strategic functions relative to the public sector.

Table 5.7: Development/Strategic and General Management Functions by Sector

	Women %		Men %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Public sector	28.0	48.9	34.6	46.6
Private sector	14.7	27.8	15.7	36.6

The overall picture in terms of management function, then, is that women occupy different functions from men and that these functions are more likely to be of a support nature. This is particularly the case for public sector women. For men and

for private sector women the functions tend to be more central in terms of being essential to the firm's survival. The MBA helped both men and women out of their respective functions and into less specialist but more strategic areas. Taking General Management and Development/Strategic functions together, little difference emerged in the extent of change in term of proportions occupying more mainstream management post MBA though the largest change occurred equally for private sector men and public sector women and smallest change for public sector men. Taking General Management alone women were much less likely to move into this function post MBA irrespective of sector.

5.5.2 Management Role

The problems encountered in terms of interpreting the data from the question on management function were largely avoided in terms of management role. The number of categories was smaller, though some merging of categories to facilitate statistical testing did take place.

Table 5.8a Management Role Before and After MBA

	Women %		Men %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Chair/Chief Executive	0	0	0.8	5.6
Director/Partner	1.2	6.9	7.4	13.7
Non Executive Director	0	3.4	0	0
Senior Manager	19.8	31.0	16.4	27.4
Middle Manager	37.2	37.9	35.2	29.8
Junior Manager	23.3	5.7	16.4	4.8
Professional/Technical	16.3	9.2	21.3	13.7
Self Employed	2.3	5.7	2.5	4.8
N	86	87	122	124

Before MBA **After MBA**

NS NS
(NS: Not significant)

Before the MBA approximately one third of both men (35.2%) and women (37.2%) were in middle management roles. Slightly more women (19.8%) than men (16.4%) described themselves as senior managers (in Coe's survey these figures were 32% and 35% respectively) with higher proportions for both sexes in the private sector (Appendix 2, Table 21). Over a fifth of women (23.3%) were in junior management as opposed to only 16.4% of men with a considerably higher proportion of women in the private sector (32.4%) working at this level than in the public sector (12.8%).

Corresponding figures for men by sector were 17.9% and 11.1% respectively. A higher proportion of men were in Professional/Technical roles and there was a greater (though small) representation of men at director or board level. Married women were less likely to be in senior management before and after the MBA (17.2% and 28.1%) compared with single women (21.7% and 30.4%) but the differences were small and not statistically significant (Appendix 2, Table 22). By parenthood, whereas women with children were less likely to be in senior roles before the MBA compared to childless women (17.2% and 22.8% respectively) post MBA figures for all management levels were broadly comparable (Appendix 2, Table 23).

As with management function, the pattern of change post MBA was similar for men and women with a general move out of junior and middle management roles into senior management. The increase into senior management was broadly the same for men and women - an increase of 11.0% and 10.2 % respectively so that 27.4% of men and 31.0% of women described themselves as senior managers at the time of the survey. Both private sector and public sector follow this broad pattern. There was virtually no change for women out of middle management roles while for men there was a fall of 5.4%. Middle management exhibited the largest gender difference: 29.5% of men and 37.6% of women were in middle management post MBA. The stability of the middle management figures for women and to some extent for men can be misleading, however, as MBA graduates may be moving into this role from junior management (note the large decrease in proportions here) and others moving out of this role into senior management. In other words the proportions, though

stable between the two time periods, may well comprise different sets of people.

Statistical testing was not satisfactory at this stage because, although fewer categories were being used than in the management function question, absolute numbers in each category was still too small. It seemed appropriate to merge the first four categories together (Chair/Chief Executive; Director Partner; Non Executive Director; and Senior Manager) as these all comprise senior roles. This reduced the number of categories to five, as table 5.8b demonstrates, though neither before nor after the MBA were differences statistically significance. Nevertheless, certain trends can be identified.

Table 5.8b Management Role

	Women %		Men %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Senior roles	20.9	41.4	24.6	46.8
Middle Management	37.2	37.9	35.2	29.8
Junior Management	23.3	5.7	16.4	4.8
Professional/Technical	16.3	9.2	21.3	13.7
Self Employed	2.3	5.7	2.5	4.8
N	86	87	122	124

Before MBA **After MBA**

NS NS

NS: Not significant

While the move into senior management was broadly the same for men and women with women registering a higher figure post MBA, a higher proportion of men than

women came into the category of Senior Roles. In other words, the top 4 senior roles of Chair/Chief Executive, Director/Partner, Non Executive Director and Senior Manager accounts for 46.8% of men at the time of the survey and 41.4% of women. The gap, however, is a small one. This gender difference widens in the private sector: 49% of men were in senior roles post MBA compared to 40.5% of women while in the public sector figures for senior roles post MBA were comparable (Appendix 2, Tables 21 and 24).

Other differences emerged between the public and private sectors. For example, whereas similar proportions of women were in senior roles in both sectors both before and after the MBA, there was a large concentration of private sector women in junior roles before the course (32.4%). This figure, however, was reduced considerably post MBA to 8.1%. The lowest proportion in senior roles was public sector men, particularly before the MBA. Private sector men saw the largest change into senior roles (21.6%) and public sector men the smallest (14.5%). The changes for women were comparable by sector. Overall, then, while there was little difference by sector for women (except for the higher incidence of junior women in the private sector before the MBA) there was a gap for men with greater proportions of private sector men in senior roles before the MBA and with private sector men appearing to benefit most from the MBA in terms of subsequent moves into these roles. There was some conformity here with data on proportions of men and women by sector in General Management/Strategic Development functions as discussed in section 5.5.1. While a higher proportion of men in the public sector were in these functions both before and after the MBA compared with men in the private sector, private sector

men (together with public sector women) experienced the largest change post MBA and public sector men the smallest.

Other differences emerged when movement into senior roles was compared by age. While before the MBA men and women in each age groups started from a comparable position in terms of senior roles, after the MBA younger women surged ahead to reach a more advantaged position in relation to older women and younger men. They still lagged behind older men however.

Table 5.9 : Senior Roles by Age and Sex

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Before MBA	9.7	10.0	27.3	29.3
After MBA	41.9	19.4	41.1	55.9
N	31	31	55	92

Whereas younger men and women were in comparable positions before the MBA (approximately 10% in senior roles) after the MBA the proportion of women increased to 41.9%. For men the post MBA figure was considerably lower at 19.4%. Women and men in the older age group also started from a comparable position but it is men who have the advantage after the MBA.

In terms of management role, therefore, the overall picture suggests that in terms of senior management, women start from a slightly higher base than men (conforming with the higher female figures in General Management in terms of function) and that

post MBA this advantage is maintained. At the other end of the scale however, they are much more likely than men to be in junior management roles though this disparity reduces considerably after completion of the course. Merging the most senior roles together alters this picture somewhat, so that men have the advantage both before and after the MBA. This is particularly the case within the private sector and overall, private sector men appear to benefit most in terms of movement into senior roles post MBA. As discussed earlier, similar findings in terms of change into senior functions (General Management and Strategic/Development) occurred for private sector men. In terms of age, young women appear to have the advantage over young men and move in higher numbers into senior positions after the MBA.

5.5.3 Salary Levels

Salary differences between male and female MBA graduates support the findings of both the EOC and the National Management Salaries Survey discussed in Chapter Two (section 2.2.6). Before the MBA, little difference emerged in terms of pay. For example 63.1% of men and 64.8% of women occupied pay scales below £25,000. Differences did emerge at the higher pay scales. For example 10% of men and only 3.3% of women earned over £35,000. More differences emerged post MBA. The figure for the under £25,000 bracket was reduced to 20% for men whereas for women the figure was almost 30%. This difference increased at higher pay scales with 36.1% of men post MBA earning over £35,000 and only 18.7% of women. In fact nearly 20% of men were in the top pay bracket of over £45,000, an increase from 3.1% pre MBA. The corresponding figure for women was 5.5% from a pre

MBA figure of 1.1%.

Table 5.10a: Salary Levels Before and After MBA (figures rounded to nearest 000)

	Women %		Men %	
£000	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
under 15	13.2	3.3	12.3	2.3
15 -20	20.9	4.4	27.7	3.1
21 -25	29.7	20.9	23.1	14.6
26 - 30	23.1	29.7	16.9	22.3
31 - 35	8.8	23.1	9.2	20.8
36 -40	2.2	11.0	3.8	13.8
41 - 45	0	2.2	3.1	3.1
Over 45	1.1	5.5	3.1	19.2
N	90	91	130	130

Before MBA
NS

After MBA
NS

NS: Not significant

These findings support some of the evidence from the National Management Salaries Survey which shows that salary differences increase at higher levels of management particularly in the private sector. To facilitate statistical testing, categories were merged to produce wider salary scales:

Table 5.10b: Salary Levels Before and After the MBA (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Men %		Women %	
£000	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Under 25	63.6	20.2	64.4	28.6
26-35	26.4	43.4	32.2	52.7
36 -40	3.9	14.0	2.2	11.0
Over 40	6.2	22.5	1.1	7.7
N	129	129	91	91

After MBA

P=0.01788
Chi square value:10.08272

Before MBA

NS

NS: Not significant

While approximately the same proportions of men and women earned under £25,000 before the MBA (two thirds in each case), two years after the MBA these figures were 20.2% for men and 28.6% for women. In other words the MBA was associated with a considerable fall in the proportion of men and women earning under £25,000 though a higher percentage of women remained in this pay bracket. At the other end of the pay scale, the difference was more marked. Over a fifth of men (22.5%) earned over £40,000 compared to the much lower figure of 7.7% for women. While statistical testing for figures before the MBA are unreliable because over 20% of cells have an expected frequency of less than five, post MBA figures are significant at the 1% level.

Comparing actual with expected figures suggests that pay differentials widen at higher pay scales. For example at the lowest pay scale post MBA, actual and expected figures are 26 and 21.5 for women and 26 and 30.5 for men. In other words more women than would be expected and less men than would be expected are in this pay scale, though the difference is not great. At the top pay scale, however, these differences become more marked. Actual and expected figures are 7 and 14.9 for woman and 29 and 21.1 for men. In other words far fewer women than would be expected are in this top category and far more men.

Table 5.11: Actual and Expected values: Pay before and after the MBA (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Men		Women	
£000	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Under 25	82 (82.5)	26 (30.5)	58 (57.5)	26 (21.5)
25-35	34 (37.1)	56 (61.0)	29 (25.9)	48 (43.0)
36- 40	5 (4.1)	18 (16.4)	2 (2.9)	10 (11.6)
Over 40	8 (5.3)	29 (21.1)	1 (3.7)	7 (14.9)
N	129	129	91	91

(Expected values in brackets)

In all cases the difference between expected and actual values is greater after the MBA than before, suggesting widening differentials post MBA qualification.

5.5.4 Pay in the Public and Private Sectors

A considerable sectoral difference emerged in terms of pay for men and women, though because of the small numbers in each cell statistical testing was not possible. The following two tables give a percentage breakdown by sector.

Table 5.12a: Pay by Sector before the MBA (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
£000	Women	Men	Women	Men
Under 15	8.0	13.3	16.2	12.2
15-20	24.0	16.7	18.9	31.6
21 - 25	36.0	33.3	21.6	20.4
26 - 30	20.0	16.7	29.7	16.3
31 - 35	10.0	13.3	8.1	8.2
36 - 40	2.0	0	2.7	5.1
41 - 45	0	0	0	4.1
Over 45	0	6.7	2.7	2.0
N	50	30	37	98

Firstly, women tend to earn more in the private sector than in the public sector . Before the MBA for example two thirds of public sector women (68%) earned less than £25,000 compared to only 56.7% in the private sector. After the MBA, private sector women still had a pay advantage though the difference is smaller: 24.3% of private sector women came into the under £25,000 category compared to 29.5% of

public sector women. At the upper end of the pay scale, nearly 13.5% of private sector women earned over £40,000 post MBA compared to only 3.9% of public sector women.

Table 5.12b: Pay by Sector after the MBA (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
£000	Women	Men	Women	Men
Under 15	2.0	3.3	5.4	2.0
15 - 20	2.0	3.3	8.1	3.1
21 - 25	25.5	20.0	10.8	13.3
26 - 30	31.4	33.3	27.0	19.4
31 - 35	25.5	23.3	21.6	19.4
36 - 40	9.8	10.0	13.5	15.3
41 - 45	3.9	3.3	0	3.1
Over 45	0	3.3	13.5	24.5
N	51	30	37	98

Secondly, while there is little sectoral difference for men before the MBA (approximately two thirds of men in both sectors earn under £25,000 and approximately 6% earn over £40,000), after the MBA men earned considerably more in the private sector than in the public sector. For example, after the MBA, 26.6% of public sector men still earn £25,000 and under compared to only 18.4% in the private sector. At the upper end the difference is even greater with 27.6% of private sector men earning over £41,000 compared to only 6.6% in the public sector.

Thirdly, similar pay profiles exist for men and women in the public sector although men still earned slightly more. Pay profiles in the private sector exhibited greater difference - not so much at the lower pay scales where the differential was broadly in line with the public sector, but at the upper pay brackets where the differential was considerably greater. For example, in the public sector 3.9% of women and 6.6% of men earned over £41,000 post MBA. A greater difference emerges in the private sector with 13.5% of women and 27.6% of men coming into this category. At the same time a larger change in terms of pay occurred for both men and women post MBA in the private sector than in the public sector.

Merging categories together into just three pay scales lost some detail but enabled statistical testing to take place:

Table 5.13a Pay by Sector before the MBA (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
£000	Women	Men	Women	Men
Under 25	70.0	63.3	56.8	63.3
25-35	28.0	30.0	37.8	25.5
Over 36	2.0	6.7	5.4	11.2
N	50	30	37	98

Public sector

NS
NS: Not significant

Private sector

NS

Table 5.13b Pay by Sector after the MBA (figures rounded to the nearest thousand)

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
£000	Women	Men	Women	Men
Under 25	31.4	30.0	27.0	17.3
25-35	54.9	56.7	45.9	38.8
Over 36	13.7	13.3	27.0	43.9
N	51	30	37	98

Public sector

NS

Private Sector

NS

NS: Not significant

Although in neither case are differences statistically significant either before or after the MBA, the above tables conform to earlier more detailed data on pay. The largest difference occurred for the private sector post MBA.

An attempt to analyse pay differences by seniority was not wholly satisfactory - again because of the small numbers in each category (only 13 women and 23 men come into the category of junior manager). However, a significant difference at the 1% level did emerge between senior men and women in terms of pay after the MBA with men tending to be concentrated in the higher pay scales, although this was not significant before the MBA. There was a high degree of comparability between men and women both before and after the MBA at middle management levels (Appendix 2, Tables 25 and 26). This supports the findings of the British Management Salaries Survey (1995) discussed in section Chapter Two (section 2.2.6) which suggests a widening of the pay gap between men and women at senior levels.

Overall, gender differences in terms of pay widen at higher pay scales, after the MBA and at senior levels (particularly post MBA). Women tend to earn more in the private sector than in the public sector both before and after the MBA, and while there is little sectoral difference in pay before the MBA, private sector men earn considerably more than public sector men after the completion of the course. Men and women in the public sector have similar pay profiles both before and after the MBA. In the private sector, however, men move ahead of women particularly at higher pay scales and private sector men appear to benefit most in terms of pay subsequent to the completion of their course.

In terms of age, the advantage that younger women had over older women and younger men in terms of moving into senior positions post MBA was not reflected in pay.

Table 5.14: Proportion of Men and Women earning over £35,000 by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Before MBA	3.2	3.2	3.4	12.2
After MBA	19.4	23.3	18.3	40.4
N	31	31	60	99

Only 3.2% of men and women in the under 35 age group earned over £35,000 before the MBA. After the MBA a gender gap emerged with a higher proportion of men (23.3%) earning over £35,000 than women (19.4%). A wider gap however appears in the older age group at the top salary scale with only 18.3% of older women

coming into this category compared to 40.4% of men.

5.5.5 Promotions and promotion prospects

Data on promotions conforms with the general findings on sectoral differences in pay. Although there was limited gender difference , the private sector saw more promotions than the public sector. For example, only 27.8% of women in the private sector had not been promoted since their MBA compared to 45.1% in the public sector. Similarly, 30.5% of women in the private sector had been promoted more than once compared to 17.7% of women in the public sector. A similar trend occurred for men: 33.7% of men in the private sector had been promoted more than once compared with only 23.3% of men in the public sector (Appendix 2, Table 28).

One possible explanation for the gender difference in pay discussed earlier is that men have been promoted more frequently than women. However, no significant difference emerged in the number of promotions subsequent to gaining an MBA qualification. Just over a third of all men and women have achieved no promotions since graduating and slightly more women (37.8%) than men (32.5%) have had one promotion. Some differences emerge after this point with just over 30% of men gaining 2 or more promotions as opposed to 24% of women (Appendix 2, Table 27). Slightly more women (12.1%) than men (10.8%) underwent a sideways change and the same proportions of men and women went on to set up their own business (5.5%) (Appendix 2, Table 29). Overall then, it is unlikely that variations in number of

promotions is sufficiently large to explain the pay differential.

In terms of age, while younger women moved in greater numbers into senior roles, younger men were more likely to have been promoted three times since the MBA. However, there was little difference between younger men and women in promotion levels zero to two. Promotions for older men and women were largely comparable (Appendix 2, Table 29).

Although not statistically significant, some difference did emerge in the nature of these promotions with more men (39.4%) than women (32.1%) being promoted within their existing organisation (Appendix 2, Table 30) and with private sector men more likely than any of the three remaining categories to progress in this way (Appendix 2, Table 31). The figure for younger men was highest at 62.1% (Appendix 2, Table 32). Women on the other hand were more likely to change organisation: over a quarter of women (26.2%) moved to a different organisation to gain their promotion as opposed to only 16.5% of men. This difference was most marked in the public sector where 23.9% of women changed organisations compared to 3.4% of men (Appendix 2, Tables 31). The figure for younger women was 31%. This trend was also borne out by the interview data where three quarters of the women interviewed had moved to their present position from a different organisation because they felt blocked in their present careers.

No consistent pattern emerged by age. Although younger men and women were more likely to have been promoted twice or more since the MBA than older men and

women, gender differences within each age groups was small (Appendix 2, Table 29). Younger men were more likely to have promoted within their existing organisation (62.1%) than younger women (34.5%), older women (30.9%) and older men (32.7%). Younger women were more likely than any other category to have been promoted by moving to another organisation (Appendix 2, Table 32). Younger men spent less time than any other category in their present position (Appendix 2, Table 38). The younger age group was more optimistic over their future prospects than the older group and while gender differences with the older age group was negligible in the younger group men were more optimistic than women (Appendix 2, Table 35).

In terms of future promotion, the same proportions of men and women (22%) viewed their prospects as good. At the same time over a third (36%) of both men and women viewed their prospects as poor. (Appendix 2, Table 33) The most pessimistic were public sector men . Only 6.7% viewed prospects as good and one half viewed prospects as poor. Private sector women were generally more optimistic than public sector women : 32.4% of private sector women viewed prospects as good compared with 15.7% of public sector women (Appendix 2, Table 34). This conforms with the higher promotion levels in the private sector as discussed earlier in this section. Differences in terms of prospects were not, however, statistically significant.

5.5.6 Length of Tenure

Differences in terms of length of tenure in present positions were statistically

significant but only at the 10% level (Appendix 2, Table 36). Overall, women tend to spend less time in their present position and this was particularly marked in the private sector. Well over two thirds of women (69.2%) have spent less than two years in their present position compared with 60.9% of men. The gender difference is wider in the public sector where 78.4% of women have spent less than two years in their present positions compared with 63.9% of men. Public sector men appear to be least mobile registering the lowest figure of 53.3% (Appendix 2, Table 37) and younger men the most mobile. At the same time, public sector men were more likely than private sector men and women in either sector to feel that they had spent longer than anticipated in their present position. (Appendix 2, Table 40). Younger age groups were more likely to feel this than older age groups (Appendix 2, Table 41). This sectoral difference may well contribute to public sector men's pessimism concerning career prospects and may be linked to the low proportion of public sector men who have had more than one promotion.

Overall, these findings on gender differences in terms of length of tenure may conform with earlier work on women's careers which are seen to be characterised by frequent job changes, career interruptions and changes of direction (Burke & McKeen, 1994; Goffee & Nicholson, 1994).

5.5.7 Attitude to the MBA

When asked to rank their reasons for taking an MBA course, the most popular choice for men and women was to improve job opportunities (24.6% and 22.0%

respectively). The second most popular choice was intellectual stimulation (18.5% and 19.8% respectively) followed by the desire to obtain a business qualification (15.4% and 14.3% respectively). The least popular top motive for men and women was to increase salary (3.8% and 2.2% respectively) (Appendix 2, Table 42). Gender differences therefore are very small and this contradicts to some extent previous findings (Chapman, 1989; Scase & Goffee, 1989) that suggest that men are more interested in salary and status than women. Little difference emerged by age, although both men and women in the younger age group were more likely than in the older age group to choose "Improve Job Opportunities" as a motive for taking the MBA (Appendix 2, Table 43). Little difference by sector emerged (Appendix 2, Table 44) although public sector men were twice as likely as private sector men to have taken the MBA in order to change careers.

Some support for earlier findings on gender differences in terms of priority given to salary and status emerged at the other end of the scale ie where respondents were asked to identify the least important motive for taking the MBA and where one might expect a similar conformity between men and women. Here, however, 23.1% of women but only 13.8% of men ranked increased salary as the least important motive. This disparity could be explained by a possible reluctance to admit to the more mercenary motive in the form of salary and status as the most important one for doing the MBA. This reluctance, however, may be diluted in the choice for the least important motive. The proportions choosing salary and status as the most important motive for doing the MBA could then be an underestimate and, if one takes the figures for the least important motive on board, this underestimate could

be greater for men than for women (Appendix 2, Table 42).

This is supported to some extent by a separate question in which 35.4% of men but only 28.6% of women ranked salary and status as very important to them and where 12.1% of women but only 3.1% of men ranked it as not important. This was significant at the 5% level. Although not statistically significant, a higher proportion of women than men rated working relations as very important (60.4% and 48.5% respectively) with younger women in particular favouring this category (71%) (Appendix 2, Table 15). This supports to some extent Scase and Goffee's (1989) view that intrinsic factors such as job satisfaction and working relations are more important to women than men. However, men with children were more likely than women with children to rank children as very important: 93% of men with children and 87.9% of women with children claimed children were very important and at the other end of the scale 6.1% of women and no men claimed that they were unimportant.

One important sectoral difference to emerge was a higher emphasis given to salary and status by private sector men (40.4%) compared with public sector men (20.0%). Public sector men were also more likely to rate children as very important: 83.3% of public sector men came into this category compared with only 64.6% of private sector men. This may suggest that public sector men are less ambitious or that they justify their lower salary levels by giving greater emphasis to other factors. Sectoral differences between women were small although public sector women were more likely to claim working relations to be very important (66.7%) than private sector

women (51.4%) (Appendix 2, Tables 16 and 17).

Some differences emerged in terms of age. Firstly, with the exception of the category "Children", younger men and women were more likely than older men and women to see *all* categories as important (the fact that the younger age group were less likely to be parents would account for their viewing children as less important). In other words, when asked to identify what is important to them the younger age group were more likely than the older age group to view salary and status, job satisfaction, working relations *and* marriage/partner as important. This may imply that younger age groups have higher expectations in terms of work and home than the older group in that they demand more from all aspects of their lives and are less willing to place any one factor in a lower level of priority. Secondly, whatever the age group, women were less likely to view salary and status and more likely to view working relations as important (Appendix 2, Table 18)

5.5.8 Benefits of the MBA

A large degree of consistency emerged between men and women in terms of the degree to which they felt the MBA had helped them in their careers (Appendix 2, Tables 45-48). Two thirds of men and women felt their MBA has helped in their career " to some extent"; 19.8% of women and 18.5% of men felt it had helped to a "great extent" and slightly more women (16.5 %) than men (14.6%) felt it had not helped. In terms of sectoral differences , a greater proportion of women in the private than in the public sector felt the MBA had helped to a great extent (23.1%

and 14.8% respectively). By the same token, only 11.5% of private sector women felt the MBA had not helped compared with nearly 20% of public sector women. No clear pattern emerged for the men though, perhaps surprisingly, more public sector (26.7%) than private sector (16.2%) men claimed the MBA had helped to a great extent (Appendix 2, Table 46). This is somewhat at odds with earlier findings from this study discussed in earlier sections which suggests lower prospects, pay and promotions for men in the public sector. No consistent pattern emerged by age, although older women (21.7%) were more likely than younger women (6.5%) to feel that the MBA had not helped (Appendix 2, Table 48).

Although not statistically significant, both men and women in senior roles were more likely to think the MBA had helped to a great extent over middle and junior management levels (Appendix 2, Table 48). In terms of age, although there was little difference between men and women and between different age groups in terms of the "to a great extent" category, considerably more women and men in the over 35 age group (21.7% and 16.2%) felt the MBA had not helped compared to the under 35 age group where figures were 6.5% and 9.7% respectively (Appendix 2, Table 32).

5.6 Summary (Question 2)

What impact does the MBA have on male and female MBA graduates in the labour market

Although it is difficult to attribute changes before and after the MBA to the qualification alone, there is undoubtedly an impact on the careers of men and women. Two thirds of all respondents assert that the MBA has helped their career to "some extent". The nature of that help seems to vary for men and women and by sector so that overall the impact on men's careers appears to be greater than on women's and the impact on private sector men is greater than the impact on private sector women and public sector men and women.

Although women do not necessarily occupy a narrower range of functions before the MBA, they do perform different functions from men. These functions are largely of a support nature. The MBA helps both men and women out of their respective functions and into less specialist but more strategic areas so that differences post MBA are reduced. Taking General Management and Development/Strategic functions together, little difference emerges in the extent of change in terms of proportions occupying more mainstream management post MBA. However, taking General Management alone, women start from a higher base but are much less likely to move into this function post MBA. This is consistent with findings on management role where there is a higher proportion of women than men at senior management level before the MBA (ie they start from a higher base) but where,

taking the top four levels together (Senior Manager, Non Executive Director, Director/Partner and Chair/Chief Executive) the change into these levels is lower for women than for men. To some extent this is also consistent with data on levels of pay where salary differences between men and women increased after the MBA and at higher pay scales.

In terms of management function, private sector women conformed largely with men in terms of types and concentrations of functions performed. However, although a slightly higher proportion of private sector women were to be found in senior management, considerably more private sector women performed junior management roles and the gap between men and women in terms of seniority appeared to be wider in the private sector. This gap is reflected in pay where the gender differential is wider than in the public sector particularly at higher pay scales. There is little evidence to suggest that women in the private sector are progressing further than women in the public sector. The MBA appears to be more beneficial for women in the public sector in terms of management function but this advantage is reduced in terms of management role. On the other hand, private sector women are more likely to be promoted and to spend less time in their present position. Differences in pay also exist with private sector women earning more than public sector women pre and post MBA. Evidence therefore on the differential impact of the MBA on women by sector is not clear though public sector women have the advantage in terms of management function and to a lesser extent management role while private sector women have the advantage in terms of pay. Private sector men, however, move ahead faster in terms of pay and seniority than public sector men and

women generally.

Some difference has emerged according to the age groups of respondents. Younger women have progressed into senior management roles more than older women and more than men, though again this is not reflected in terms of pay. Younger age groups have the advantage in terms of promotion and feel more optimistic about the role of the MBA in benefiting their careers. Young men in particular are more likely than older men to move within their existing organisation.

This suggests therefore that although the MBA may help women to move out of support functions such as administration or personnel into more central functions, this does not necessarily mean that their careers progress as much as men in term of seniority levels or in term of pay. At the same time, the category "senior manager" may incorporate different levels and it is possible that women may find themselves stuck at the lower levels of senior management. The lack of women at levels above the category Senior Manager lends credence to this view as does the widening pay gap between men and women at higher pay scales. The tendency for women to change organisation to further their career may also suggest that they get blocked at this level and it is possible that women embark on the MBA in order to help break through a glass ceiling which is located somewhere above the lower levels of senior management.

The next chapter presents the findings of the qualitative data which adds to the profile of male and female MBAs.

CHAPTER SIX

PROFILE OF MBAs AND ATTITUDES TO THE QUALIFICATION: INTERVIEW DATA

6.1 Introduction

The interview data is presented and discussed in Chapters Six and Eight. In terms of the 5 research questions set out in Chapter One (section 1.5), interviews have added greater depth to the profile of the women MBAs that emerged from the survey, and has similarly explored how men and women viewed the MBA in terms of their own career success. Interview data has introduced an agency perspective, supplementing survey material on the nature of career barriers and introducing new material on how these barriers have impacted on women's lives and on their work experiences. Interviews have explored further the extent to which the MBA was able to overcome career barriers and the effect of gender mix on the experiences of women in the organisation.

Although the focus of this research is on women MBAs, the need to include men in any inquiry so as to avoid a sexist methodology was evident from Chapter 4 (section 4.4). This has enabled comparisons between men and women to take place on key

issues such as profile, background and career progress. Interviews with a small sample of men enabled this process to continue. Results from the interviews with men are integrated, wherever possible, with data from the female sample.

Overall, therefore, interviews have added new data, supplemented existing survey data and focused on the agency perspective ie on the lives of men and women managers at work and on the way in which career barriers are experienced and resisted as well as on the implications of gender mix for those barriers and for strategies of resistance.

As in Chapter Five, this chapter focuses on the profile of MBAs but from a different perspective. While survey data was able to document and measure characteristics of male and female MBA graduates in terms of, for example, pay and management level, this chapter focuses on attitudes. In particular, it discusses the outcomes of specific questions concerning the MBA namely the reasons for taking the course, its perceived benefits, the impact on the holder and the organisation. Other common themes emerged in the course of general discussion and these concerned attitudes to other women in the organisation and to themselves as women managers.

6.2 Overview of interview sample: Female MBAs

	Job	Organisation	Married	Child	Management level	Gender mix
Maggie	marketing manager	travel company	no	0	senior	male
Tracy	partner (self employed)	advertising	yes	2	senior	mixed
Barbara	director of development	children's charity	yes	1	senior	mixed
Bronach	supplies manager	telephone company	yes	2	middle	male
Kim	civil servant	civil service	yes	2	middle	male
Heather	partner self employed	manufact'g	no	0	senior	male
JackieL	assistant planning director	health authority	yes	2	senior	mixed
Amanda	sales manager	oil company	no	0	senior	male
Ann	head of food technology	school	yes	2	middle	male
Susan	deputy head librarian	university	no	0	senior	mixed
Mandy	self employed	mentoring	no	0	senior	na
Caroline	portfolio dev manager	BT	no	0	senior	male
Carol	director of business and support services	NHS trust	yes	0	senior	mixed

Maura	marketing manager	private hospital	yes	1	senior	mix
Wendy	account manager (assistant)	bank	no	0	middle	mal

From the table above, it can be seen that 8 women were married and seven had children. The majority (11) were working at senior management levels with the remaining 4 describing themselves as middle managers. Nine women were working in organisations where they were the minority, 5 work in mixed environments and one was self employed and the only person in the organisation. Nine women were working in the private sector, one in the charitable sector and five women in the public sector. Three women were running their own business - two in partnership with one other and one as a sole trader. Only one woman from the sample was sponsored to do the MBA by her employing organisation.

All the women with children discussed the difficulties of combining their career with family responsibilities. Barbara referred to the pressures of coming home from work, cooking the meal and coping with the homework demands of her eleven year old son. Bronach often lied to her boss about her whereabouts when she had a child's appointment to keep and was considering setting up her own business to gain some control over her working life. Kim referred to the problems created when child care arrangements broke down. Jackie was experiencing increased demands on her time at work and was considering a break from work to look after her two young children. Maura, a single parent, discussed the problems of tiredness as she attempted to juggle the twin demands on her. For childless women, children were still discussed

as an issue. Carol, recently married, was considering the pitfalls of combining her work role with a small child and was feeling daunted by the prospect. Mandy and Maggie referred to their childless state as a price they had paid by having a high powered career.

Male MBAs

	Job	Organisation	Married	Children	Management Level	Gender mix
Steve	business planning executive	telephone company	yes	1	middle/tech	male
John 1	director	music agency	yes	2	senior	mixed
John	senior scientific officer	civil service	yes	0	middle/tech	male
Peter	head of finance	university	no	0	senior	male
Tim	operations manager	computer games	yes	2	senior	male
James	business planner	telephone company	yes	2	middle	male

tech = technical

Of the six men interviewed, two worked in the public sector, three in the private sector and one was self employed. Two worked in technical roles with some middle management responsibility, one was a middle manager and three, including the self employed director, were senior managers. All except one was married and four of the six had children. Three were sponsored to do the MBA by their employing

organisation. All except one worked in male dominated environments. None of the men with children referred to the pressures of combining child care with the demands of work.

As Chapter Four (section 4.9.3) has discussed, the level of intimacy created with the women interviewees was deeper than with the men and this could have affected the quality and the depth of the data. Women certainly gave a stronger presentation of themselves. Women were more forceful, their personalities appeared more dynamic. They had a good sense of humour and were able to laugh at themselves and at situations which were often to their disadvantage. This powerful presentation of self was not so evident with the men. This may reflect Vinnicombe's (1987) findings concerning the greater tendency for women to be "catalysts" in that they demonstrate more personal charisma and enthusiasm than men.

6.3 Attitude to the MBA and Demands of the course

When asked how they had experienced the course, women expressed more enthusiasm about the MBA than men but at the same time recognised the costs in terms of time and workload. "I loved it"; "I enjoyed it more than other education I've ever done"; "It was so rewarding" ; "I thought it was wonderful"; "It was brilliant"; "it (the MBA) gives you a JOY for your work" were quotes taken from women's interviews. The men did not express the same level of enthusiasm, although this could be due to a greater reticence on their part (discussed in Chapter Four, section 4.9.3). Two of the six men interviewed expressed positive views: for one it was

"great fun" and for another he had enjoyed it "enormously". All the men except one affirmed that benefits had accrued from the course.

All women discussed the costs of doing the course in terms of work load and the demands made on their time. Women with children in particular overcame considerable odds to finish the course. The demands of coping with work (all the women worked full time), family and the course were particularly onerous as these quotes illustrate:

> *"It was quite difficult. When I actually went back to work in the summer and it was just timed as the MBA project was starting which was the last 6 months so I was working with a baby and having to submit my project by the end of December - and that was quite hard work.."* (Kim 226-229)

> *"When I went out for my MBA evening course which was 4 hours two nights a week and babysitting cost me £5 an hour - so it cost me a LOT to do it"* (Maura 218- 219)

> *"I got up an four o clock to do the work. And I just did it"* (Maura 225)

This supports some of the findings of Dix's (1991) study of MBA students in which many had to overcome considerable obstacles to achieve their goal. Such perseverance was recognised by several women as something that men did not necessarily possess:

"I think women are more tenacious generally and will make the best out of a bad job - kids, doing the MBA and working as well... " (Tracy 257-259)

*"When we had a project or an assignment or something to give in - and they (*the men*)'d be sitting there and saying - I had such a hard time - had to get up this morning to write this* (drums fingers on desk) *You think YOU'VE had a hard time - you just DON'T KNOW!"* (Maura 245-248)

Such determination on the part of women was recognised by Steve, who pointed out that while the men from his cohort "more or less said that's enough" in terms of further qualifications or promotions and had remained in the same or similar level jobs, women on the other hand had been "galvanised" to do PhD's, further qualifications and go for promotions.

6.4 Reasons for undertaking the MBA

Both men and women undertook the MBA for four main reasons:

- the need for management training

Both men and women stressed the need to acquire management training. For some the structured nature of the course was a distinct advantage as opposed to a series of one off courses with no formal qualification at the end. The need for management

training was often discussed in association with increased demands through organisational change:

> *"And once I was in management I realised that we were just approaching the purchaser provider divide at the time - it was obvious that people were going to have to acquire skills - business skills..."* (Jackie 42-44)

At the same time, there was a sense, particularly from the men, that during restructuring, organisations would only keep on their most qualified staff. An MBA might therefore help them to survive rounds of redundancies.

- compensation for lack of business or management qualification

Six women and four men felt the need to compensate for either a lack of qualifications at first degree level or for what they considered to be an inappropriate background. For women this was mainly a background in Arts or Humanities while for men it was a technical background - neither of which were felt to be helpful for a management career.

- desire to change careers

Four women discussed the desire to change careers particularly out of operational or specialist areas into general management eg social work into charity management; radiography into hospital management. Three men referred to a similar move but out

of technical areas such as engineering and IT.

- the growing need to have a management qualification to boost career chances

Three women felt that the MBA was becoming more popular and was a requirement in some areas. As one woman manager put it, " *if you didn't have one you wouldn't even get through the door* "(Maura 37-38).

For men, the emphasis was more on the need to formalise the training they had already had and, as discussed earlier, to compensate for the disadvantages of a narrow technical background.

6.5 Prejudice towards the MBA

Eight out of the 15 women but only one of the six men interviewed had experienced some negative attitudes towards the MBA from work colleagues or from partners whose qualifications were now of a lower level. Controversy surrounded the relative importance of management qualifications versus direct experience with hostile parties prioritising the latter. Negative attitudes were prevalent among middle aged men who had entered their respective organisations some time previously and who had worked their way up the hierarchy without the benefit of formal qualifications. The following quotes from the women concerned are illustrative of this idea:

"The chief executive had come in at a very junior grade and had worked his

way right up and certainly I felt some bad vibes....even though they had sponsored it". (Kim 113-118)

"...there are some people who are very cynical basically because they don't have any formal qualifications themselves and tend to be quite resentful of it and I think MBAs in particular now". (Bronach 82-4)

*"..and I've heard him (*line manager*) put it down, saying you know it's OK having this* (MBA*) but practice is completely different*". (Amanda 180-1)

"You may have an MBA qualification, but that doesn't cut any ice with me..." (Bronach 94, quoting male line manager)

"our chief executive more or less said to me when I started - well - you may have an MBA you may think you're smart but you prove yourself here". (Maura 136-7)

This tendency to devalue the status of the MBA was not experienced to the same extent by the men, only one of whom (Steve) encountered negative attitudes. This again was from more senior managers who had been in the organisation some time and who were often less qualified than more junior staff. One manager (John 2) claimed that the organisation had not "shown any interest" in the MBA qualification. No other negative experiences by the men were documented.

Two women (Barbara and Jackie) who worked in the charitable and public sector respectively encountered some negative attitudes concerning the appropriateness of a management qualification in areas such as NHS, social work or education:

> *"I think there are some snipy comments because I think that people in my field regard me as a bit of a deserter - having done business management rather than gone on to do an MA in applied social science or something - and that I'm therefore committed to this sort of Tory philosophy of markets..which I'm not because I don't think it works in the NHS"*. (Barbara 120-124)

6.6 Benefits of the MBA

Respondents were asked early on in the interview how the MBA had helped them in their careers. Women were generally very positive about the impact of the MBA on their careers and/or on their job performance. The following quotes help to capture the general feeling of enthusiasm about the qualification:

> "*It helps me enormously - it helps my understanding*" (Maggie 83)

> *"It gave me a whole new set of frameworks*" (Barbara 59)

> *"It was brilliant! It really helped my understanding of what went on in the company..."* (Bronach 73-4)

"I learnt all sorts of things and could apply them in a practical sense.. It was incredibly relevant." (Jackie 51-2, 62)

"It just opened my eyes really" (Amanda 580)

"I'm now able to talk about creative management...and that's really quite an exciting personal development that's come out of it" (Susan 81-3)

*"..it's (*the MBA*) NOT just work oriented - it's a WHOLE LIFESTYLE!"* (Maura 120-1)

While the men discussed the benefits they felt they had acquired from the course, they were generally more measured in their approach. Men discussed the advantages conferred by being more marketable and having greater mobility. Tim felt he had greater confidence and Peter felt that he was more able to understand what motivated people which he found useful in managing his staff. John 2, however, felt the MBA had not conferred any benefits and that his organisation had shown little or no interest in his qualification.

Benefits from the MBA fell into the following overlapping categories:

- skills/knowledge
- confidence
- networks

- credibility
- interview support
- language

6.6.1Skills/knowledge

The most frequently cited benefit to come out of the MBA for women was the acquisition of skills and knowledge which enhanced job performance and understanding of issues. This was cited by thirteen of the fifteen women respondents. Fewer men discussed this aspect though John 1 felt strongly that the MBA had helped him in terms of running his own business and Tim was managing his section differently as a result of new ideas acquired from the course.

Sub categories included:

- enhancing functional operations: many women as well as the two men mentioned above expressed the view that their knowledge and understanding meant they could perform certain operational and functional areas more successfully eg finance, marketing, IT.

- Providing a framework for analysis : ie new ways of thinking and tackling problems, strategic thinking

- understanding issues/ rationale behind change: eg the rationale behind

internal markets, matrix management, subcontracting, planning.

6.6.2 Language

An important benefit identified by women MBAs in particular concerned the demystification of management discourse, particularly strategic management, via an understanding of the "jargon" or concepts used. The following quotes illustrate this view:

> *"I think the best thing's its done is helped me to understand the jargon maybe that the accountant uses or the marketing people"* (Tracy 113-5)

> *"The other thing was...creative management was a totally new concept for me...I'm now able to talk about creative management to other people and put ideas into action...."* (Mandy 79-81)

> *"Just to know what people are talking about...to know what the critical issues are..."* (Amanda 49-51)

Understanding the issues and being able to use the language can have important benefits for women in meetings where male colleagues, for example, can be challenged with confidence:

"being able to sit in at a very.. .and this business of HIGH POWERED meetings and say "why" (pause) and THAT to me is the most...to sit down and really argue with the tough boys..." (Maura 118-120, 128)

"I've noticed that people may talk a lot but they don't necessarily know a lot. I didn't realise I'd get that from the MBA" (Wendy 32-33)

*"It (*understanding the language*) makes you more prepared to ask what might appear dumb questions"* (Maggie 98-9)

" I think that generally I have a vocabulary that I can use which possibly a lot of people don't have - I can come out with things like STEP analysis - and they look at you and they think oooh..it means you feel on the same level as other managers and you're talking their kind of language" (Wendy 72-76)

Only one man, John 1, referred to the use of language as an important benefit from the MBA. This had been particularly important in terms of financial management and had enabled him to guide his business through a recent financial restructuring more easily and effectively.

6.6.3 Interview support

Seven women commented on the help the MBA had given them either in terms of getting them onto initial short lists or in terms of the interview process itself:

*"It (*the MBA*) meant I went into the interview with a really good grounding...I felt really comfortable"* (Bronach 63-4)

"The guy who was my boss..he was extremely analytical and when I came for the interview - if I couldn't have talked concepts, couldn't have understood some of these things...I would never have made that jump...to becoming a manager" (Amanda 561-564)

One marketing manager described how she was required at the interview to assimilate a large case study and prepare a presentation in an hour:

"Without a doubt, if I hadn't done the MBA how would I have analysed that and then had to go into the two interviews and played roles...and present your findings... "(Caroline 300-3).

Three men referred to the importance of having the qualification for job mobility though benefits in terms of the interview process itself were not discussed.

6.6.4 Credibility

For several women, the enhancement of credibility, particularly as a woman manager, was an important feature of the MBA. Seven women discussed this as an issue:

"I do believe that your qualification gives you a better profile among your male colleagues...rather than starting off with people saying oh yes there's that dozy woman at least they knew you couldn't be entirely stupid" (Maggie 107-8, 122-3)

For another woman in an all woman partnership:

"..it's helped in having it on the business card - because we're two women in our sector...it's not like we're somebody they've greeted off the street.." (Tracy 115-6, 119-20)

For one senior marketing manager the MBA helped improve her credibility at an important presentation:

"I couldn't have stood up in front of that professor of Harvard and held my own without doing it (the MBA) so I wouldn't have been credible with the people outside of here..." (Amanda 575-577)

Another manager referred to the need for a strong profile when dealing with professionals in a hospital environment:

"...the reason being that it is credibility and I still think that without an MBA-WITHOUT THAT- you - you just wouldn't be taken seriously..I mean you're working with professional people and .. they don't want carpet salesmen.."

(Maura 45-47, 51-52)

No men discussed the enhancement of credibility.

6.6.5 Networks

Six women discussed the way in which the MBA had broadened their networks and introduced them to different people from different sectors. This led to useful contacts. No men referred to this as a benefit from the qualification.

6.6.6 Confidence

Six women discussed the ways in which the MBA had helped their confidence. Examples cross cut some of the above categories . For example women felt more confident in using the language, because their credibility had been enhanced and because they felt more able to perform well in functional areas they had previously had little experience of. In addition, the MBA confirmed for them that they did in fact know a lot and could progress.

Tim referred briefly to increased confidence, though not in detail.

While account has to taken of the greater willingness on the part of women to express their views and to disclose their feelings, women claimed a wider range of benefits and included in those benefits ways in which the MBA had helped them

overcome certain disadvantages and address vulnerabilities. Ways in which the MBA had helped them overcome lack of credibility, lack of confidence or a tendency to be confused or overawed by the language of 'experts' were all openly discussed. Although the survey data suggests that men and women experience lack of confidence in similar proportions (Table 7.1), it may be that because of their gender, men do not experience lack of credibility as a problem. In addition, they may be less willing to disclose vulnerabilities in the course of the interview and to disclose how the MBA may have helped them in this respect.

6.7 Previous employment

To build up a picture of their past employment experiences, managers were asked to provide brief details of their previous employment and reasons for leaving. Thirteen of the women had moved to their present position from a different organisation with only two women having been promoted from within their existing organisation. Eight of those thirteen moved from their previous position because they felt blocked in their careers or because they had experienced some form of discrimination. Of those eight, two had decided to set up their own businesses. Two women had discovered that their replacements (all male) had been put on higher grades, including board membership, than the ones they had occupied while in post and that the new incumbents also earned larger salaries. For Jackie, the decision to leave her previous position was taken simply because there were no women at higher levels than herself and therefore, she surmised, little chance of her ever being promoted. Two women found themselves stuck in administrative roles - a common problem for

many women in that function. Maggie, claiming the existence of a glass ceiling in her previous firm, described how she "whipped through the grades" and then "just stuck there" while men with less experience overtook her.

By contrast, all the men with one exception had moved into their present position from within their existing organisation. The one exception, John 1, had set up his own business after a period of time working for a larger organisation. Only one male manager made reference to career blocks in a previous employment which was the result of a personality clash with a previous line manager.

6.8 Summary

This chapter has focused mainly on the attitudes of male and female MBAs to the qualification and on their previous employment experience. It has therefore added further to the knowledge of the overall profile of male and female MBA graduates.

Women generally felt positive about the MBA and had often overcome considerable obstacles to complete the course. No single reason emerged for taking the MBA, though the need for management training and for a management qualification together with the desire to change careers were commonly expressed. Some women had experienced prejudicial attitudes to their MBA from older male colleagues in particular. Nevertheless, they felt strongly that the MBA had benefited their careers and enhanced skills, confidence and credibility were frequently mentioned in this respect.

Again, no single reason for undertaking the course emerged from interviews with men, though the need to compensate for a technical background was important as was the need to acquire a formal management qualification. Men did not express the same level of enthusiasm as women over the MBA, though they acknowledged the benefits from the course. These benefits were largely concerned with greater career mobility and less concerned with the enhancement of confidence or credibility. Only one man had experienced prejudice or hostility towards his qualification

The majority of women from the interview sample had arrived at their present position from a different organisation whereas men had been promoted from within their existing organisation. Many women had been blocked in their previous post so that changing organisation was one way to progress. The nature of career barriers encountered and the impact of those barriers on women's experiences are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MBA GRADUATES AND CAREER BARRIERS: QUANTITATIVE DATA

7.1 Introduction

Chapter Five presented the results of the empirical data that pertained to research proposition 1. This chapter presents the findings of the empirical data relating to proposition 2, namely:

Despite the MBA women managers face barriers to career progression

The chapter is split into four sections. **Section One** presents the findings on the types of barriers male and female MBA graduates have experienced in their careers together with attitudes towards the MBA and career barriers. **Section Two** compares women MBAs with women managers generally in order to assess the impact of the MBA on career barriers. **Section Three** analyses the dynamics of numbers in order to investigate the extent to which career barriers are located within organisational structures. These sections conform with research questions 3, 4 and 5:

3 **What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these barriers impact on the careers, experiences and behaviours.**

4 **To what extent does the MBA help women to overcome career barriers**

5 **What are the implications of tokenism for career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs**

Quantitative data will go some way towards testing proposition 2 and towards answering the above research questions. This will be integrated with the qualitative data, to be discussed in Chapter Eight, to provide a fuller explanation.

7.2 SECTION ONE: MBA Graduates and Career Barriers

What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these barriers impact on the careers, experiences and behaviours.

Quantitative data mainly addresses the first part of the above question. Such data provides information on the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates. The second part of the question, relating to the impact of those barriers on careers, experiences and behaviours, will be addressed mainly in Chapter Eight by the qualitative data as this relies heavily on the accounts of individual women in the course of the interviews.

As discussed in Chapter Four (section 4.9.2), one part of the questionnaire (entitled "MBA Graduates and Career Barriers") concerned career barriers and the extent to

which the MBA had helped overcome such barriers. Respondents were asked firstly to choose from a possible list of 11 which barriers they had experienced in their career. A twelfth option "No Barriers" was provided. In a second question, respondents were asked to choose the largest single barrier from the same list. In other words, they were allowed only one choice on this occasion. This was followed up by two similarly structured questions on work pressures. Respondents were also asked about the extent to which the MBA qualification was thought to have helped overcome barriers and on the attitude within their organisation to women managers.

7.2.1 Barriers Experienced (question 28 on the questionnaire)

Considerable differences emerged in the types of barriers experienced by men and women. Despite the well documented problems women with children experience in the management and professional sector' (eg Coe, 1992; Davidson & Cooper, 1992) and the perceived impact of caring responsibilities on careers that has emerged from this study (Chapter Five, section 5.2.4) women MBA graduates perceived the exclusiveness of informal networks forged by men, which Coe refers to the 'Men's Club' (the same term was used in this questionnaire), as the greatest barrier to their careers rather than, for example, family commitments or child care problems.

Table 7.1: MBAs and Career Barriers

	Barriers Experienced		Single Largest Barrier		P value
	women	men	women	men	
Inflexible working patterns	18.7	19.3	4.4	6.2	0.83344
Lack of training provision	24.1	25.4	3.3	3.1	0.96615
Insufficient education	7.7	11.5	2.2	2.3	0.58649
Family commitments	17.6	20.8	4.4	5.4	0.83893
Lack of adequate child care	14.3	2.3	1.1	0.8	*0.00207
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	36.3	26.9	15.4	13.8	0.25126
Lack of career guidance	29.7	25.4	3.3	9.2	0.05908
Prejudice of colleagues	39.6	21.6	12.1	10.8	0.00410
Social pressures	13.2	3.8	2.2	0.8	*0.03687
Men's club network	56.1	8.4	26.4	4.6	0.00000
Sexual discrimination	20.9	0	1.1	0	*0.00000
No barriers	7.7	24.6			0.00511
N=	91	130	91	130	

* cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 greater than 20%

As Table 7.1 illustrates, women largely complained of external or attitudinal factors whereas men tended to choose more personal or individual factors as career barriers. For example the top two scores for men were 26.9% for Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence and 25.4% each for Lack of Training and Lack of Career Guidance none of which relate directly to negative attitudes. By contrast the top two scores for women were 56.1% for the Men's Club and 39.6% for Prejudice of Colleagues both of which relate to attitudes and/or discriminatory practices.

Women exhibited a higher level of consistency in their responses than men in that there was more consensus among the women as to what barriers they had experienced. This is illustrated by the high score for the Men's Club barrier. There was less consistency amongst the men as evidenced by the wider spread of figures. The highest score for women, for example, (the Men's Club at 56.1%) is nearly twice as great as the highest score for men (Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence at 26.9%).

7.2.1.1 Insufficient Education/Lack of Training/Inflexible Working Patterns

While Lack of Training Provision emerged as an important factor for both men and women as a barrier experienced (25.4% and 24.1% respectively), Insufficient Education was low down for both sexes (11.5 and 7.7% respectively). Interestingly, the proportions of women choosing Lack of Training as a barrier decreased with seniority from 38.5% at junior levels, 24.2% at middle management levels and 17.0% at senior levels suggesting that more training is given to managers in senior positions (Appendix 3, Table 1). Sectoral differences were small, although a higher proportion of women in the private sector (24.1%) than the public sector (15.7%) complained of Inflexible Working Patterns. Interestingly the reverse was true for men (Appendix 3, Tables 2 and 3). Women were also more likely to perceive their working patterns as inflexible if they were married and if they had children (Appendix 3, Tables 4 and 5). For example, 11.5% of single women and 8.6% of childless women found Inflexible Working Patterns to be a barrier. This compares

with 21.9% of married women and 36.3% of women with children.

7.2.1.2. Lack of Confidence

The only 'non-attitudinal' barrier to attract a higher female than male response was Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence. This was identified by 36.3% of women and 26.9% of men. An interesting sectoral difference emerged here with more private sector women claiming lack of confidence as a barrier (45.9%) than public sector (27.5%) (Appendix 3, Tables 2 and 3). A large age difference also occurred here with a higher proportion of the younger sample identifying lack of confidence as a barrier (45.2%) than the older sample (31.6%) (Appendix 3, Table 6). Figures also differed in terms of seniority with 46.2% of junior women claiming this to be a barrier compared to 36.6% of senior women (Appendix 3, Table 1) However, the small number of women in junior positions (13) limits the usefulness of this figure. Lack of Motivation/Confidence is also more prevalent for married women (36.0%) than for single or separated/divorced women (28.4%) (Appendix 3, Table 4). This factor, therefore, appears to hold women back more than men and is a particular problem in the private sector, among younger and/or more junior women and for married women.

7.2.1.3 Family and Child care Barriers

Despite the fact that the majority of women with children complained that having children had adversely affected their career (Chapter Five, section 5.2.4), and despite

the high proportion of women (56.4%) who claimed in a subsequent question that conflicting demands of home and work were a key pressure (Table 7.11) a surprisingly small number identified Family Commitments or Lack of Adequate Child care as a barrier. However, junior women managers were more likely to identify both these factors than middle or senior managers (Appendix 3, Table 1). For example, 23.1% of junior managers claimed Lack of Adequate Child care to be a barrier compared with 9.1% of middle and 14.6% of senior managers. Such difference could reflect the ability of higher income groups to afford adequate and reliable child care which lower income groups, ie more junior levels, could experience as problematic.

Not surprisingly, the proportion experiencing these two barriers increased for the married female sample and for women with children (Appendix 3, Tables 4 and 5). For example, none of the single sample and one quarter (25.1%) of the married sample identified Family Commitments a barrier. Married women were also more likely to identify Social Pressures as a barrier - 17.2% of the married sample compared to only 3.8% of the single/separated/divorced sample. Men with children were less likely to identify Family Commitments (22.1%) and much less likely to identify Lack of Adequate Child care (3.5%) suggesting that they do not see responsibility for child care as their own.

7.2.1.4 Attitudinal factors: The Men's Club, Prejudice from Colleagues and Sexual Discrimination

The Men's Club emerged as the most important barrier for women. The high figure (56%) was unaffected by marriage , by sector, by age or by seniority (Appendix 3 Tables 1-6). In all cases scores of between 54% and 59% were recorded. Exceptions included middle managers, 61% of whom identified the Men's Club as a barrier. The second exception was women with children, 63.7% of whom identified the Men's Club as a barrier. This compares with 51.7% of women without children and 56% generally. In fact, women with children were more likely than childless women to claim attitudinal factors as a barrier. For example, 30.3% of women with children identified Sexual Discrimination as a barrier compared with only 15% of childless women. Given the higher figure for Social Pressures discussed above (24.2% for women with children and 6.8% for childless women), women with children appear to experience particular difficulties which may originate in the extra pressures experienced from combining work with family or from discriminatory practices that limit their progress up the hierarchy. A slight disparity occurred with age so that a higher proportion of the older group of women (here defined as 35 and over) chose the Men's Club as a barrier (58.3%) compared with the younger group (51.6%) though the difference was not significant. Interestingly, 8.5% of men identified the Men's Club as a barrier they had experienced - indicating that some men as well as women may be excluded from the mainstream male networks within the organisation. This figure rose to 10% for the older sample.

The next most popular choice for women was Prejudice of Colleagues: 39.6% of women chose this option. This figure, again, was consistent across sector, marital status and existence of dependent child. Some variation occurred with seniority so that 43.9% of women at senior levels and 45.5% of women at middle management level identified this as a barrier compared to the much lower figure of 15.4% at junior levels. Prejudice could be linked to seniority in that senior women may be more likely than junior women to challenge the traditional role placed on them in organisations. As a result, they may encounter heightened resistance. Possibly linked to seniority was the tendency for older women (41.7%) to identify this as a barrier than younger women (35.5%). Interestingly, a higher proportion of women in the public sector identified prejudice as a barrier (47.1%) than in the private sector where the figure was lower at 32.4%.

Overall, with the exception of Lack of Confidence/Motivation which is an important barrier for women (particularly younger women, for women in more junior positions and for women in the private sector), attitudinal factors have emerged as important barriers for women. The Men's Club is a popular choice here and there is a high degree of consistency in terms of sector, marital status and existence of a dependent child.

7.2.2 The Largest Single Barrier (question 29 on the questionnaire)

Perhaps a more accurate picture of barriers experienced can be drawn from the question 29 in which respondents were asked to identify the single largest barrier that

they have experienced in their careers. As only one item can be selected here the choice is more exacting and could indicate more clearly the nature of career barriers experienced. In most cases the results conformed largely with the outcomes of the previous question when any number of barriers could be chosen. Women demonstrated a greater consensus than men on what constituted the single largest barrier and organisational or attitudinal factors were a popular choice for women. For men, however, the pattern was less clear.

7.2.2.1 The Men's Club

As Table 7.1 demonstrates, by far the most popular choice for women was the Men's Club, chosen by 26.4% of the sample. This figure stood out in that it was considerably higher than the second most popular choice which was Lack of Confidence at 15.4% followed by Prejudice from Colleagues at 12.1%. The other choices were fairly evenly spread. Therefore Prejudice of Colleagues and the Men's Club , both of which embody attitudinal or discriminatory factors, together were chosen by 38.5% of the female sample as the single largest barrier. As with barriers experienced, a large degree of consistency was found between the general sample of women, the married sample, by parenthood, public and private sectors and, in this case, different age groups in terms of the proportions choosing the Men's Club as the largest single barrier (Appendix 3, Tables 8-10). The one exception here, as with barriers experienced, was management level with a higher proportion of middle managers choosing this option (33.3%) compared with both senior levels (24.4%) and junior levels (15.4%) (Appendix 3, Table 7). Again, this may reflect a tendency

for women middle managers to get blocked and experience difficulties breaking into senior levels. Interestingly, whereas one fifth of the female sample chose Sexual Discrimination as a barrier they had experienced, this option was not popular when asked to choose the single largest barrier. Only 1.1% of women made this choice, presumably because they felt the Men's Club was a more accurate reflection of the barriers they had experienced.

7.2.2.2 Other Barriers

Apart from Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence which attracted 15.4%, other more individual or personal factors were not a popular choice for women. As with barriers experienced, a higher proportion of private sector women chose Lack of Personal Motivation/ Confidence as the largest single barrier (20%) compared with only 12.7% of public sector women (Appendix 3, Tables 2 and 3). No other sectoral differences emerged. No clear pattern emerged for the men, however, although Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence attracted the largest response with 13.3%. In fact, with the exception of private sector women, there is little difference between men and women in choosing this factor as the largest single barrier. The second most popular choice for men is, interestingly, Prejudice from Colleagues at 10.8% followed by Lack of Career Guidance at 9.2%. However, there was generally less consensus here than with the women as to what was considered the largest single barrier.

7.2.3 No Barriers

Considerably more men (24.6%) than women (7.7%) claimed to have experienced no barriers in their careers. This difference is significant at the 1% level. Fewer women in the private sector and fewer younger women claim no barriers (3.8% and 3.2% respectively). For the public sector the figure is 8.5%. Figures increase with seniority so that 5.6% for women at senior levels, 6.4% at middle management levels and 7.7% at junior levels claim no barriers. No difference emerged between the married and the general sample in this respect.

7.2.4 Summary: Barriers

Insufficient education does not emerge as an important barrier experienced for men or women MBA graduates, though some evidence exists for lack of training, particularly at senior levels. This may well tie in with the qualitative data in which the need for management training emerged as an important motive for undertaking the MBA course.

Attitudinal barriers and the closing of ranks against women have been identified by research as a serious impediment to women (eg Hansard Society, 1990; Howe & McRae, 1991; Coe, 1992). There appears to be little change here for women with an MBA qualification. Women with an MBA are more likely than men to identify organisational or attitudinal factors as barriers in their careers. A remarkable degree of consistency emerged in terms of the proportions of women choosing the Men's

Club as a key barrier. These proportions were broadly unaffected by age, by sector, by marital status or by management level. In addition, the Men's Club appears to be a more appropriate description of barriers experienced over, for example, Sexual Discrimination as evidenced by the number of women who chose the former over the latter when asked to identify the largest single barrier. This suggests that women are locating their disadvantage in organisational cultures and practices in preference to prejudice or discrimination even though the latter may well be part of the experience of the Men's Club culture.

Despite the above consistency, there were some variations for different groups of women. For example, younger, junior and single women experienced less barriers than older, senior and married women and these tended to concern lack of confidence, lack of training and to some extent child care difficulties. Barriers appeared to intensify and to be identified more with the organisation and its culture for older women, for more senior women and for those with children. These groups were more likely to identify the Men's Club and Prejudice of Colleagues as barriers experienced. In fact, in seven categories out of the eleven, higher proportions of older women identified barriers than younger. This may reflect the lack of caring responsibilities in the younger age group or an easier upward career routes at more junior levels. In other words younger and more junior women may not have reached the glass ceiling. Alternatively, younger women, having been brought up in the era of equal opportunities, may not experience the culture in which they work as disabling or, they may not recognise it as such.

7.2.5 Can the MBA overcome Career Barriers

To gain a clearer idea of the link between the MBA and barriers, respondents were asked to what extent they felt their qualification had helped them overcome barriers in their careers (Appendix 3, Table 11). Little gender difference emerged here. Approximately one tenth of both men and women felt their MBA had helped them overcome career barriers to a "great extent" with one third feeling it had not helped. Younger MBAs were generally more positive (Appendix 3, Table 14) as were private sector workers (Appendix 3, Table 12). The most optimistic of all were private sector women, 21.6% of whom felt that the MBA had helped to overcome career barriers to a large extent (only 8.1% of private sector men came into this category). The least optimistic were public sector women, only 3.9% of whom felt the MBA had helped them overcome career barriers to a large extent and public sector men, 40% of whom felt it had not helped. This conforms to previous findings from this study (eg Chapter Five, section 5.5.4) which suggest that the MBA is a more powerful career asset in the private sector. It may not be surprising, therefore, that public sector workers should feel less optimistic.

An analysis of respondents' views on the MBA by barrier experienced (Appendix 3, Table 15) disclosed some variations. Men who had chosen Lack of Training provision were more likely than women who had chosen that same option and much more likely than if they had chosen other barriers to think the MBA had helped to a large extent. Where women had chosen barriers which would be largely unaffected by their qualification, for example Family Commitments, Child care Problems,

Sexual Discrimination, they were less likely to feel the MBA has helped them overcome career barriers. For example only 2% of women who chose Sexual Discrimination felt the MBA had helped in this respect. By contrast, the scores for Lack of Motivation/Confidence reflects the likelihood that the MBA would have an impact in this area. For example, while 47.4% of those women who chose Sexual Discrimination felt the MBA had not helped them overcome career barriers, only 21.2% of women who chose Lack of Confidence came into this category.

7.2.6 Attitude of the Organisation to Women Managers

In some respects men and women share the same view concerning the attitude of their organisation towards women managers (Appendix 3, Table 16). For example, around 48% of both men and women claimed their organisation has a positive attitude. However, whereas 28.1% of women claimed the attitude to be negative, only 17.2% of men fell into this category. The largest difference occurred in the public sector with public sector men considerably more optimistic than women (Appendix 3, Table 17). Nearly two thirds of public sector men (62.0%) viewed their organisation as having a positive attitude compared to 49.0% of public sector women. At the other end of the scale the difference was even greater with only 3.4% of public sector men seeing the organisation as having negative attitudes whereas nearly a third of public sector women (31.4%) hold this view. A large degree of conformity existed between private sector men and women with approximately a quarter feeling the organisation had a negative attitude to women managers. Little difference emerged between public and private sector women. However, senior

women were more optimistic than junior - 59% of women working at senior levels see their organisation's attitude to women as positive compared to only 39.4% at middle and 30.8% at junior levels (Appendix 3, Table 20). Younger women were more optimistic than older women (Appendix 3, Table 18) and childless women more optimistic than women with children in this respect (Appendix 3, Table 19).

7.3 SECTION TWO: Comparing Women Managers with MBAs

Question 4: To what extent does the MBA help to overcome career barriers

One interesting source of comparison concerns female MBA graduates and women managers generally in terms of barriers experienced. Such a comparison could indicate the extent to which the MBA has helped to reduce career barriers. The following table sets out the result of Coe's (1992) survey into women managers and the results of this survey on barriers experienced.

Table 7.2 :Female MBA Graduates and Women Managers: Barriers

	Women Managers		Women MBAs	
	Barriers %	Largest single barrier %	Barriers %	Largest single barrier %
Men's Club Network	43	23	56	26
Prejudice of Colleagues	35	9	40	12
Lack of Career Guidance	28	7	30	3
Sexual Discrimination	23	5	21	1
Lack of Training	18	3	24	3
Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence	18	10	36	15
Family Commitments	17	10	18	4
Inflexible Work Patterns	12	4	19	4
Social Pressures	12	1	13	2
Lack of Adequate Child care	9	3	14	1
Insufficient Education	7	3	8	2
No Barriers	19	17	8	8

Adapted from Coe, p15 (MBA figures rounded to the nearest whole number for comparison)

Compared with Coe's (1992) IM survey of women managers, the Men's Club network was identified by more women MBAs as both a barrier and as the single largest barrier encountered in their careers. Fifty six percent of MBAs claimed to have experienced the Men's Club as a barrier compared to 43% of women managers. A similar but smaller difference occurred for Prejudice of Colleagues with more MBAs choosing this option than women managers. The largest differences between the two samples, however, occurred with the option Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence which was chosen by 36% of MBAs but only 18% of women

managers and the Men's Club which was chosen by 56% of MBAs but only 43% of IM managers. In fact in every single case, a higher proportion of MBAs identified barriers than women IM managers generally. The one exception was Sexual Discrimination where the figures were broadly comparable. Finally, whereas 19% of women managers in Coe's survey thought they had encountered no barriers, the figure for MBAs was only 8%.

These figure may seem surprising as one would expect an MBA to help break down barriers and to give women greater confidence in their working lives. From the above table, the reverse appears to be the case with some barriers, particularly those located in the organisation such as the Men's Club being chosen by a higher proportion of MBAs and with a higher proportion, too, claiming Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence as a barrier. Differences between the two samples may explain some of the variation. For example, the sample of women managers were all drawn from IM members who tend to be more senior than women managers as a whole (Coe, 1992). Their career success may then reduce the likelihood of career barriers being identified and increase the likelihood of no barriers being claimed. However, this tendency was not borne out in the sample of MBAs: women at senior levels were as likely as junior women to identify barriers such as the Men's Club (approximately 52% in both cases) and equally unlikely as junior women to claim no barriers in their careers (both within the 5-7% range). At the same time, even when (albeit approximately) matched for seniority, women MBAs (including the roles Senior Managers, Non Executive Directors, Director/Partners and Chairs/Chief Executives only) were still more likely to identify career barriers than women IM

managers. For example, 54% of senior women MBAs claimed the Men's Club to be a barrier compared to 43% of women IM managers.

Table 7.3 Barriers Experienced: IM Members and Senior MBAs

	Women IM managers %	Senior women MBAs %
Men's Club network	43	54
Prejudice of Colleagues	35	44
Lack of Career Guidance	28	27
Sexual Discrimination	23	20
Lack of Training	18	17
Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence	18	37
Family Commitments	17	20
Inflexible Work Patterns	12	22
Social Pressures	12	15
Lack of Adequate Child care	9	15
Insufficient education	7	7
No Barriers	19	5

The overall picture, then, is that women MBAs are more likely than women IM managers to experience career barriers and that large differences occur between the two samples over Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence and the Men's Club. This difference is largely unaffected by matching the two samples for seniority. This suggests that the MBA may have done little to help women overcome career barriers..

7.3.1 Summary

Women MBAs are more likely than IM managers to experience career barriers and large differences between the two samplers occurred for the Men's Club and Lack of Motivation/Confidence. On this basis the MBA would appear to have done little to break down both organisational barriers (the Men's Club) or personal barriers (Lack of Motivation/Confidence). Taking into account differences in seniority between the two samples makes little difference to comparisons between the two samples. It is unlikely that the MBA itself has contributed to barriers experienced though it is possible that it has raised expectations and hence perceptions of barriers of women themselves. The time difference between the two surveys (2 years) may also be a small but significant factor in that the current survey has coincided with restructuring and downsizing in the workplace possibly reducing career opportunities.

Moreover, although men and women were equally optimistic or equally pessimistic concerning the extent to which the MBA has overcome career barriers, women who chose the Men's Club as a barrier were more likely to claim that the MBA had not helped in this respect. This is not surprising considering the potential intractability of cultural or organisational factors which are largely outside women's control. On the other hand, those women who identified Insufficient Education as a problem were more likely to see the MBA in a positive light in having overcome career barriers.

7.4 SECTION THREE: Tokens and Non Tokens

Question 5: What are the implications of tokenism for career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs

Work within the organisation-structure approach has focused on the numerical distribution of women within the organisation (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Ely, 1994). Tokenism was explored in this research project to assess the extent to which organisational structures impede the career progress of women with MBAs.

7.4.1 Tokens defined

As explained in the Chapter Four (section 4.9.2), token women were identified as those who worked in organisations where they formed 20% or less of the total. The total could refer to a section, department or the whole organisation. The key factor here was that the total group should consist of colleagues who generally worked at the same level as the women themselves and with whom they had regular working contact. This proportion is broadly in line with Kanter's definition of a " skewed group" in which the ratio of men to women was defined as approximately 85:15.

Forty three percent of the sample came into the category of 'token' women in that they formed a ratio of 20% less with the remaining 57% as 'non token' in that the percentage was higher. Of the 47 token women, 17 (36.2%) worked with no other women. Only 16.9% of the total female sample worked with equal numbers of men

and women and 12.0% worked with more women than men

7.4.2 Profile

Few differences emerged in the profile of token women in comparison with non token women. However, in many ways they tended to conform more fully to the general profile of the woman manager. For example, token women tended on average to be younger (44.4% were in the 25-34 age bracket compared to 25.5% of non tokens and 35.4% generally); they were less likely to be married (65.7% were married compared with 72.3% of non tokens and 71.7% generally) and they were less likely to have children (72.2% of tokens had no children compared with 61.7% of non tokens and 63.6% generally). Exactly three quarters of tokens had no caring responsibility compared with 59.6% of non tokens and 63.7% generally (Appendix 3, Tables 21-24).

No overall pattern emerged in terms of qualification (Appendix 3, Tables 25 and 26). Although more tokens had a degree (83.3% compared with 73.9% of non tokens and 77% generally) more non tokens had a postgraduate qualification (23.9% compared with 11.1% of tokens). Slightly more tokens had an academic background in Science, although the difference here was small.

The overall profile of token women then seems to fit the profile of the woman managers generally but some of the characteristics are even more pronounced . None of the differences, however, are statistically significant.

7.4.3 Tokens and Non tokens at work

At work tokens take on some of the characteristics of male MBAs. Proportionately more tokens work in the private sector than non tokens though there is a higher percentage of tokens in the public sector than in the private sector.

Table 7.4a: Tokens and Non Tokens by Organisational Sector

Organisation	Token %	Non token %	Total %
Public sector	50.0	59.1	53.4
Partnership	2.8	6.8	5.6
Self employed	11.1	0	6.8
Public Company	36.1	25.0	29.5
Voluntary sector	0	9.1	4.5
N	36	47	n= 83

(Statistical testing not possible because of the existence of an empty cell)

One half of tokens were working in the public sector and 36.1% in public companies at the time of the study. A further 11.1% were self employed. This compares with 59.1% of non tokens who were working in the public sector and one quarter who were working in the public companies. In fact, taking public and voluntary sectors together accounts for over two thirds of non tokens. No tokens worked in the voluntary sector and no non tokens were self employed. However, numbers in each category were too small for statistical testing. To enable such testing to take place,

categories were merged together. In the following table, self employed, partnership and public company have been merged to form the private sector. The public sector has been merged with the charitable sector:

Table 7.4b Tokens and Non Tokens by Organisational Sector

	Token	Non token
Public sector/Charity	50.0	68.2
Private sector	50.0	31.8
N	36	44

P=0.09865
Chi square: 2.72727

Although not statistically significant at the 1% or 5% level, the p value suggests some difference in terms of sector, with tokens more likely to be located in the private sector than non tokens.

Some differences also emerged in terms of organisational activity (Appendix 3, Table 27). However, because of the large number of categories and the relatively small number of respondents (83 in total), total numbers in each cell are often very low. The results therefore have to be treated with caution, although they do suggest certain concentrations. Because of the diverse nature of the different categories, there was no obvious way to merge categories together.

The largest concentration for tokens and for non tokens was in Other Services followed by Education and Training though the magnitude of the figures differ. For

example, 41.7% of tokens were in Other Services compared to 34% of non tokens. Conversely, 29.8% of non tokens were in Education and Training compared to only 19.4% of tokens. The other major difference lay in Utilities with 13.9% of tokens identifying this as their organisation's main activity and no non tokens.

On balance tokens work in larger organisations than non tokens though the difference was not statistically significant (Appendix 3, Table 28). For example, 11.1% of tokens were working in organisations of up to 50 employees compared with 23.4% of non tokens. At the other end of the scale, 55.6% of tokens were working in organisations of over 1,000 employees compared to a slightly lower figure of 48.9% of non tokens.

Tokens were also much more likely to be heavily outnumbered in terms of gender mix at senior levels.

Table 7.5: Tokens, Non Tokens and Gender Mix at Senior Levels

	Token %	Non token %
Heavily Outnumbered	51.7	21.2
Outnumbered	48.3	51.5
More Women/Equal	0	27.3
N	29	33

Heavily Outnumbered: where women formed less than 20% at senior levels
Outnumbered: where women formed more than 20% at senior levels
(statistical testing not possible because of the existence of an empty cell)

Over a half of tokens (51.7%) and 21.2% of non tokens were 'heavily outnumbered'

in that women formed less than 20% of the total at senior levels. Whereas 27.3% of non tokens worked in organisations where senior personnel were evenly mixed no token women came into this category. However, as discussed in the Chapter Four (section 4.9.2.2) , the results of the question concerning gender mix of personnel more senior to the respondents themselves were not analysed systematically on the grounds that it failed to discriminate successfully between different categories. Therefore outcomes from this question need to be treated with caution. What does emerge, however, is that gender imbalances are likely to permeate to senior levels of the organisation.

Token women, therefore, tend to work in the private sector, to be concentrated in Other Services and, to a lesser extent, Education and Training and to work in larger organisations where the gender imbalance permeates the upper echelons of the hierarchy. Non tokens, on the other hand, are more likely to be in the public sector, to be concentrated in Education and Training, and to work in organisations where there is a more even gender balance at senior levels.

7.4.4 Tokens, Non tokens and Management Function

As with organisational activity, the large number of categories in terms of management function together with the relatively small number of respondents meant that numbers in each cell were very low. As discussed in Chapter 4 (section 4.9.2) in relation to the data on management function, there was no easy way to merge categories together and this was not attempted for fear of adversely affecting

the quality of the data. However, certain concentrations are worth noting (Appendix 3, Table 29).

Firstly, token women exhibit some of the characteristics in terms of function (with the exception of Education/Training) that was earlier associated with men (Chapter 5, section 5.5.1). For example, before the MBA, token women were concentrated in Computing/IT (15.6%), Education/Training (15.6%) and to a lesser extent Finance/Accounting (9.4%), Marketing/Sales (9.4%) and Management Consultancy (9.4%). Non tokens, on the other hand, conform to the general profile of female managers. They were concentrated before the MBA in Administration (19.0%), Education/Training (19.0%) and General Management (31.0%). Very few token women are in the area of Administration (6.3% before and 5.7% after the MBA).

Secondly, after the MBA concentrations change so that for token women there are five main and equal areas of Education/Training, Computing/IT, Development/Strategic, Management Consultancy and General Management all at 14.3%. For non tokens the concentrations are modified to a lesser extent to include General Management (27.7%), Development/Strategic (14.9%) and Education/Training (17%)

Thirdly, the largest difference between token and non token women before and after the MBA is in the area of General Management. Token women are much less likely to be in this function. Whereas 31.0% of non tokens before and 28.9% after their MBA were in General Management the figure for tokens is a mere 6.3% prior to the

MBA increasing to 14.3% so that even post MBA the difference is quite wide. Taking on board the potential difficulty of separating out General Management from Development/Strategic referred to in Chapter Five (section 5.5.1) and merging the two functions together increases the difference:

Table 7.6: Tokens, Non Tokens and General_Management/ Strategic Development Functions

	Non Token %	Token %
Before MBA	35.8	9.4
After MBA	44.5	28.6
N	47	36

As Table 7.6 illustrates, a wide difference emerges between token and non token women in terms of occupation of General Management and Strategic/Development functions before and after the MBA: over a third of non tokens were in this function before the MBA compared to only 9.4% of non tokens. After the MBA the difference is still substantial though it has narrowed.

Overall, with the exception of education, token and non token women tend to occupy different functions before and after the MBA. Non token women occupy the more traditional female functions (which explains their non token status). As the above figures show, after the MBA fewer token (28.6%) than non token (44.5%) women were in generalist or strategic functions. These functions are often associated with

senior positions and with key areas of decision making. This trend is most marked pre MBA and although tokens experience a larger increase post MBA into generalist and strategic functions, the disparity still exists.

7.4.5 Tokens Non Tokens and Management Role

These differences in terms of seniority are reflected to some extent in terms of management role, though the differences are not statistically significant. Differences are reduced after the MBA.

Table 7.7: Tokens, Non Tokens and Management Role

	Token %		Non token %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Senior*	17.6	41.2	20.0	43.5
Middle manager	29.4	38.2	48.9	41.3
Junior manager	29.4	2.9	15.6	4.3
Professional/Technical	23.5	11.8	11.1	8.7
Self employed	0	5.9	4.4	2.2
N	34	34	45	46

* senior = Senior Management, Non Executive Directors, Director/Partner, Chair/Chief Executive

Before MBA	**After MBA**
NS	NS

NS: Not significant

As table 7.7 illustrates, before the MBA one fifth of non tokens were in senior

management, 48.9% were in middle management and 15.6% were in junior management. This compares with 17.6% of tokens who were in senior management, 29.4% in middle management and 29.4% in junior management. In addition, over a fifth (23.5%) of tokens were in professional/technical roles compared only 11.1% of non tokens. Overall, then, token women have a lower proportion in senior and middle management and a much higher proportion in junior management and in professional/technical roles prior to the MBA.

However, for token women some of the differences that exist in terms of management role are reduced post MBA. Consequently, changes are particularly marked for token women. For example, there is a fall of nearly 27% in junior management for token women post MBA compared to a fall of only 11% for non token women. There is also a large fall for token women out of professional/technical roles. However, the moves into senior management roles is broadly the same for both sets of women so that figures post MBA register only a small advantage for non token women.

Comparing management role with management function leads to some consistencies and some differences. Although prior to the MBA both sets of data suggest that tokens occupy more specialist and more junior positions, and although there still seems to be a bias against tokens post MBA in terms of management function, this is not reflected as much in management role post MBA where figures for levels of seniority register only a small difference in favour of non tokens. In both sets of data, changes for token woman appear to be greater than changes for non token women.

7.4.6 Tokens, Non Tokens and Salary Levels

Suggestions of disadvantage for token women are not, however, reflected in pay. Token women tend to earn more then non token and, unlike management function and management level where differences post MBA were reduced, the pay gap between token and non token women increases after the qualification.

Table 7.8a: Tokens, Non Tokens and Salary Levels (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Tokens %		Non tokens %	
£000	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
under 15	11.1	0	15.2	6.4
15-20	25.0	2.8	19.6	6.4
21-25	25.0	16.7	34.8	21.3
26-30	22.2	38.9	23.9	23.4
31-35	11.1	11.1	4.3	34.0
36-40	2.8	19.4	2.2	4.3
41-45	0	2.8	0	2.1
Over 45	2.8	8.3	0	2.1
N	36	36	46	47

As Table 7.8a illustrates, slightly more token women occupy the higher pay scales and fewer are in the lower pay scales. For example, 61.1% of tokens and 69.6% of non tokens earned less than £25,000 before the MBA. At the other end of the scale, 5.6% of tokens and 2.2% of non tokens earned £36,000 and above. Post MBA, however, differences increase with 34.1% of non tokens earning under £25,000 - an

improvement on the pre MBA figure of 68.6%. For tokens the improvement is considerably greater with the corresponding figure falling from 61.1% to only 19.5%. This compares with the equivalent post MBA figure for men of 20% .

At the upper end of the scale only 8.5% of non tokens earn over £36,000 whereas for tokens this figure is significantly higher at 30.5%. This compares with 18.5% for women MBAs generally and with 36.1% of men. Token women, then, may have more in common with male MBA graduates post MBA than with their non token counterparts in terms of pay.

To facilitate statistical testing, categories were merged so that only three pay scales were taken. Statistical significance at the 1% level emerged for pay post MBA though figures before the MBA were not significant, suggesting that differences in terms of pay increased after the MBA.

Table 7.8b: Tokens, Non Tokens and Salary Levels (figures rounded to nearest thousand)

	Token %		Non token %	
£000	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Under 25	55.6 (20, 23.7)	22.2 (8, 10.4)	73.9 (34, 30.3)	34.0 (16, 13.6)
25 - 35	38.9 (14,11)	47.2 (17, 19.1)	23.9 (11, 14)	57.4 (27, 24.9)
Over 35	5.6 (2, 1.3)	30.6 (11, 6.5)	2.2 (1, 1.7)	8.5 (4, 8.5)
N	36	36	46	47

Before MBA:
NS

After MBA: P=0.03224
Chi square: 6.86888
(Figures in brackets: actual and expected values respectively)

Comparing expected and actual figures in each cell reveals that while both before and after the MBA there are fewer tokens and more non tokens than expected in the lowest pay scale, the difference between the figures is not great. At the top pay scale, however, although absolute figures are small, the proportional difference between expected and actual figures is greater. For example, while the expected figure for non tokens after the MBA was 6.5, the actual figure was nearly twice as great at 11. Similarly, while the expected figure for non tokens in this pay scale was 8.5, the actual figure was half that amount at 4. While the low numbers in each category mean figures need to be treated with caution, the table as a whole does suggest that tokens tend to earn more than non tokens and that the size of the disparity increases with salary levels.

7.4.7 Tokens, Non Tokens and Attitudes to the MBA

No significant difference emerged in how tokens and non tokens viewed the MBA in terms of helping them in their careers although a slightly higher percentage of tokens (25%) felt the MBA had helped them to a great extent compared to 19.1% of non tokens (Appendix 3, Table 30).

Promotion levels too were broadly in line, although tokens were more likely to have had no promotions since the MBA (39.1%) than non tokens (33.3%) (Appendix 3, Table 31). Career progress was also similar with approximately one third progressing within their organisations and 26 -28% progressing with a different organisation.

Tokens were more likely to have experienced no change (20%) than non tokens (16.7%) (Appendix 3, Table 32).

However, a difference did emerge in how prospects within the organisation was viewed with 25.5% of non token viewing promotion prospects as good compared with only 13.9% of tokens (Appendix 3 Table 33). In addition, a significant difference emerged in terms of respondents' views concerning the attitude of their organisation to women managers.

Table 7.9: Tokens, Non Tokens and Attitudes of the Organisation to Women Managers

	Tokens %	Non Token %	Total %
Positive/Very Positive	27.8	63.8	48.3
Neutral	36.1	12.8	23.1
Negative/Very Negative	36.1	23.4	28.1
N	36	47	

P = 0.00320
Chi square: 11.48959

Generally, token women were much more pessimistic in terms of their organisation's attitude to women. Nearly two thirds of non tokens view this in a positive light compared to only 27.8% of non tokens. At the other end of the scale, whereas 23.4% of non tokens claim their organisation's attitude to be negative or very negative, for token women this figure is higher at 36.1%. However, token women were more likely to see their organisation's attitude as neutral - 36.1% as opposed to 12.8% for non tokens.

On average tokens seem to spend slightly less time in their present position: 80.6% of tokens have been in their present position for less than 2 years compared with 61.7% of non tokens. At the other end of the scale, 13.9% of tokens have been in their present position for over 4 years compared to 19.1% of non tokens (Appendix 3 Table 34)

To summarise, data on management function and role suggest that token women may experience some disadvantage in terms of seniority, particularly before the MBA, though in terms of management role the gap narrows subsequent to their gaining the qualification. This is not the situation in terms of pay, however. Tokens tend to earn more than non tokens and the pay disparity increases after the MBA. While career progress as measured by number of promotions and type of career change is largely comparable, token women are considerably more pessimistic than non token over the attitude of their organisation to women managers

7.4.8 Tokens, Non tokens and Attitudes to Work and Home

Tokens and non tokens demonstrated a high degree of consistency in their choice of factors on which they placed great importance (Appendix 3, Table 36). The overwhelming majority chose job satisfaction (89.4% and 91.7%) with marriage and partner a close second with approximately three quarters choosing this option. Salary and status came low down the list for both groups (36.2% of non tokens and 19.4% of tokens) though it is interesting that the figure for tokens is considerably lower in the light of the higher salaries they appear to earn. The most popular motive for

taking the MBA for tokens and non tokens was to improve job opportunities. Largest differences between the two groups occurred for the desire to obtain a business qualification which was more popular with tokens and intellectual stimulation which was more popular with non tokens (Appendix 3, Table 35).

7.4.9 Tokens, Non Tokens and Career Barriers

Some similarities and difference emerged in terms of barriers experienced by token and non token women MBAs. Little difference emerged in terms of Insufficient Education, Family Commitments and Lack of Child care. In each case figures were relatively low. One third of both token and non token women chose Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence, approximately 30% chose Lack of Career Guidance and approximately 40% chose Prejudice of Colleagues.

Differences between token and non token women emerged in terms of Inflexible Working Patterns (22.2% and 12.8% respectively) and Lack of Training Provision (30.6% and 19.2% respectively) suggesting that such working practices may be associated with male dominated organisations and that women working in such organisations may be losing out in terms of training. Other key differences concerned attitudinal factors, or factors that could be related to the culture and practices within the organisation. In each case, token women were more likely than non tokens to identify these as career barriers they had experienced.

Table 7.10:Tokens, Non Tokens and Career Barriers

	Token %		Non Token %		All Women %		P value
	Barrier	Largest Barrier	Barrier	Largest Barrier	Barrier	Largest Barrier	
The Mens Club	72.2	41.7	46.8	17.0	56.1	26.4	0.03167
Sexual Discrimination	27.8	2.8	19.1	0	20.9	1.1	0.40168 *
Social Pressures	16.7	2.8	8.5	2.1	13.2	3.8	0.50120
Prejudice of Colleagues	41.7	5.6	38.3	14.9	39.6	12.1	0.24462
Inflexible Working Patterns	22.2	2.8	12.8	6.4	18.7	4.4	0.16076 *
Lack of Confidence	36.1	16.7	36.1	17.0	36.3	15.4	0.99877
N	36	36	47	47	83	83	

(* cells with minimum expected frequency < 5 more than 20%)

Significant differences emerged between token and non token women in terms of The Men's Club at the 5% level. As Table 7.10 illustrates, nearly three quarters (72.2%) of tokens have experienced the Men's Club as a barrier in their career. Not only is this a high figure in its own right, but it is significantly higher than non tokens at 46.8% and for women MBAs generally (56.1%). In terms of the largest single barrier the same trend is reflected with 41.7% identifying the Men's Club

against only 17.0% of non tokens and 26.4% generally. Other more structural barriers reflect similar, though less marked, differences. For example, 27.8% of tokens view Sexual Discrimination as a barrier compared to the lower figure of 19.1% for non tokens and 16.7% of tokens identified Social Pressures compared with only 8.5% of non tokens. Prejudice of Colleagues, however, does not exhibit the same tendency and it is non tokens who identify this more frequently. Interestingly, Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence, a popular choice for tokens and non tokens alike, demonstrates a remarkable degree of similarity so it does not appear to be the case that gender mix affects the degree of confidence felt by women MBAs though it is worth noting that the figures in each case are relatively high, suggesting that, despite the MBA, lack of confidence or motivation remains an important barrier.

7.4.10 Summary: Tokens and Non Tokens

Interesting differences have emerged between token and non token women in this survey. Token women conform more fully to the profile of the women managers generally in that they are younger, have a higher level of qualification and are less likely to be married or to have children. Although a higher proportion of women MBAs work in the public than the private sector, token women are more likely than non token women to be found in private sector organisations. They tend to perform similar functions to men but to be in less senior positions than non token women. In terms of management role, however, the MBA seems to have had a greater impact on token women than on non token women so that any difference in seniority is greatly reduced post MBA. This is not, however, reflected in terms of pay. Token

women, who already have the pay advantage over non token women, move further ahead to widen the gap that already existed between the two groups . This is despite token women's more junior status.

On the face of it, then, in terms of seniority and in terms of pay the MBA helps token women more than non token women and this may well be reflected in the higher proportion of tokens who view their prospects as good. However, barriers at the organisational level are viewed as a problem by higher proportions of token than non token women. For example, they are more likely to see their organisation as having negative attitudes towards women managers and they appear to experience more problems with lack of training than both non tokens and men. By far the greatest difference between the two samples however lies in the degree to which token and non tokens chose the Men's Club as a career barrier and, to a lesser extent, Sexual Discrimination. This suggests that organisational and cultural factors are more powerful barriers for token women and that structural factors associated with numbers are still a significant factor affecting women's career progress even with an MBA qualification.

7.5 General Summary

This chapter has addressed proposition two in order to assess the validity of the organisation- structure approach when applied to women MBAs, namely that:

Despite the MBA women managers face barriers to career progression that are

located within the organisation, its structures and processes.

The chapter was organised around three questions which were addressed as part of the investigation of the above proposition:

3. What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these barriers impact on the careers, experiences and behaviours.

In addressing the first part of the question, the survey data suggests that women experience cultural or attitudinal factors as major career barriers. Women tended to identify organisational or attitudinal factors as barriers in their careers as opposed to more personal or individual factors which were identified by men. There was also a greater consensus among women than among men as to which were the most important barriers. The Men's Club emerged as the barrier most frequently encountered and as the most important single barrier and there was a high level of consistency here in terms of age, sector, marital status and management level. There was a preference for the Men's Club as a description of barriers encountered over other attitudinal or organisational factors such as Sexual Discrimination or Prejudice of Colleagues. This suggests that women's experience coincides with cultural barriers at the organisational level and that these *may* be embedded in patriarchal attitudes of exclusion and demarcation. However, more data is required in order to explore this aspect more fully and to answer the second part of the question concerning the impact of barriers on experiences and behaviours. This will be

addressed in the next chapter which discusses the interview data.

4. To what extent does the MBA help to overcome career barriers

Comparing women MBAs with women managers generally gave a picture of the extent to which the MBA may have altered the perception or experience of career barriers. On this basis, the MBA has done little to neutralise or lessen the incidence of barriers. In fact, a higher percentage of women MBAs have encountered career barriers compared with women managers generally with the one exception Sexual Discrimination. Large differences occur for the Men's Club and for Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence. On this basis the MBA would appear to do little to increase confidence levels or to break down organisational barriers and the high proportion of women experiencing the Men's Club who express pessimism concerning the ability of the MBA to overcome barriers lends support to this view. Raised expectations subsequent to the MBA may be a factor here explaining the readiness of women to identify barriers. Other factors may include changes in organisational culture following downsizing or restructuring which may limit career opportunities.

5 What are the implications of tokenism for career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs

The numerical distribution of women is part of the organisation's internal structure. The validity of the organisation- structure approach in explaining the position of women MBAs was tested by analysing the impact of 'tokenism' on women MBAs

career progress and on barriers experienced.Tokenism emerged as a key issue in understanding the experience of women in the organisation. While tokens tend to be in less senior positions than non tokens before the MBA, the gap then narrows suggesting that the MBA may have a greater impact on tokens than non tokens in terms of management function and management role. However, in terms of pay, tokens tend to earn more than non tokens both before and after the MBA and, unlike management function and management role, the gap increases post MBA and at higher pay scales. Tokens generally view their prospects as good even though they see their organisations' attitude to women managers as negative and even though more tokens experience organisational barriers than tokens. This is particularly the case with the Men's Club which suggests that organisational and cultural factors are potent barriers for token women and that structural factors associated with numbers are still a significant factor affecting women's career progress even with an MBA qualification.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CAREER BARRIERS AND ORGANISATIONAL FIT: INTERVIEW DATA

8.1 Introduction

Following on from the quantitative data on career barriers presented in the previous chapter, Chapter Eight outlines the results of the interviews. Interviews considered individual experiences of career barriers and how the practices of organisational cultures impacted on men's and women's working lives. Attempts have been made to integrate data on male MBAs with data on female MBAs. However, this has not been possible in all areas because the responses to questions posed or issues explored varied between the two sexes. In general men were less able than women to discuss the culture of their organisations except in the most superficial terms. Similarly discussions on career barriers were limited. Some male respondents claimed not to have encountered career barriers while for others barriers experienced had little connection with the culture of the organisation, its practices or processes. While this is valid data in itself, the differing responses by men and women and the lack of overlap in content made integration of the two sets of data difficult to achieve. Section 8.2.1 discusses male respondents and where appropriate, data from interviews with male MBAs has been incorporated within each relevant section.

8.2 Culture of the Organisation

As we have seen from Chapter Three (section 3.5.2) an exploration of organisational structure and its associated culture is an integral part of the organisational-structure approach to understanding women's position in management. These cultures are often male constructed (Marshall, 1984,1992; Cassell & Walsh, 1994) and reflect male values and male interests. An analysis of culture, according to Smircich (1993) "moves us in the direction of questioning taken for granted assumptions, raising issues of context and meaning, and bringing to the surface underlying values".This helps to expose the more subtle barriers to women's progress but also raises important questions concerning how women respond to being part of a possibly alien culture and the strategies they use to accommodate the demands made upon them

During interviews men and women were asked to describe the culture of the organisation and to elaborate on the nature of friendships or support networks at work. Although this elicted valuable information from the women in particular, a considerable amount of material pertaining to organisational culture emerged at other points during the interview which supported or occasionally contradicted earlier responses.

8.2.1 Men and Organisational Culture

Material elicited from men was not wholly satisfactory. Men had some difficulty in describing their culture in depth so that responses tended to be superficial and largely

uncritical. James, for example, described the culture of his organisation as "intelligent" on the grounds that everyone had a masters degree. Steve described a "role" culture which was bound up in formal procedures while John 1 described an individualistic, hierarchical culture which paid lip service to team working. Peter and Tim both saw their cultures as "dynamic". Steve, the only man to work in an organisation (his own) which was female dominated, saw his company as "flat" where "we are all in it together, kind of thing" and where there was less "infighting" than in more male dominated situations. In fact, several men commented on the positive effects that women made or would make to the organisational culture, although men were not always able to explain the nature of these effects.

There was no sense that men felt in any way out of place or uncomfortable in their work settings. The fact that men are more likely to feel comfortable with prevailing attitudes and practices which they perceive as gender neutral and 'normal' (Kanter, 1977; Freeman, 1992) may explain their less questioning and less critical attitude than women who may be more aware of work cultures, particularly relating to gender, and of its potential impact. As Maddock and Parkin (1994) point out, women are likely to be more aware of organisational culture simply because they are disabled by it. This may help to explain the difference in richness and depth of material between men and women on this issue.

The following sections discuss the findings of the interviews with women on how they experience their organisation's culture.

8.2.2 Women and Organisational Culture: Organisational Fit

Women described the culture of their organisations in different ways and the degree of comfort experienced or "organisational fit" varied. Organisational fit, as used by Cassell and Walsh (1994), refers to how women experience the culture of their departments and the culture of their organisations as a whole. In Cassell and Walsh's preliminary model of organisational fit the culture and values of the organisation create definitions of appropriate behaviours for the members of the organisation. The successful application of appropriate behaviours leads to a state termed 'symbiosis' where an individual fits neatly into the cultural expectations of the organisation. Consequently through applying appropriate behaviours they achieve organisational fit - a situation where they feel generally comfortable about the culture of the organisation. The more common experience, however, is for women to feel some discomfort in attempting to apply such behaviours. According to Cassell and Walsh (1994) this discomfort could lead to a form of "cognitive dissonance" as originally outlined by Festinger (1957). Different strategies can be adopted by women as a response to such dissonance, some of which may involve a change to behaviours and some which may involve an attempt to change the organisation itself. Although not wishing to delve too deeply into the psychological costs of such strategies (as beyond the remit of this thesis), the concept of organisational fit is a useful one for the purposes of this analysis: it focuses on organisational culture and at the same time incorporates within its frame of reference the notion of career barriers in the sense that women who do not experience good 'fit' feel disabled by the hidden barriers of the culture and its practices.

As a first step in analysing the potential effects of different organisational cultures on women MBAs career progress, women were categorised into different levels of 'organisational fit' dependent on how comfortable they felt with prevailing norms, values and behaviours in their organisation. While men were also asked about their organisational culture, the concept of 'organisational fit' was not an appropriate one to describe their experience. This was because male respondents did not express the same level of dissonance with their organisations. Nor did any contradictions in terms of their actual and their described experiences emerge (this was an important aspects of women's accounts of their experiences).

By the same token, it did not seem appropriate to classify the three women who were self employed (Tracy, Mandy and Heather) into different degrees of organisational fit. In Mandy's case, she was the only person in her organisation so the concept of an organisational culture and how well she fitted into that culture did not apply. Tracy and Heather were both partners, owning and running their companies with one other person. In each case, the culture of the organisation was, by their own admission, largely determined by themselves as the most senior personnel. These three women were not, therefore, included in the classification of organisational fit though data on career barriers and on their experiences of the 'men's club' when meeting outside clients has been used later in this chapter.

8.2.2.1 Good Organisational Fit

Women who felt comfortable in their organisations, where they had friends, where

they felt included in all activities and where policies were generally favourable to women were described as experiencing a 'good organisational fit'.Two women out of the fifteen interviewed came into this category - Barbara and Carol. Barbara worked for the charitable sector where the gender mix was predominantly female (70%). The senior management team comprised 5 women and 1 man where this man was the overall director. Carol worked for an NHS trust where the gender mix was described as 50/50 including the trust board. The chief executive was female. Both women managers were on the board of directors.

Both women described the culture as supportive, inclusive and non competitive. They felt in no way excluded from any aspect of organisational life. In fact a common factor was the forging of friendships and the sharing of problems with colleagues:

> *"People go out of their way to have social occasions together"* (Barbara 159)

> *"This trust is very consultative, very much working, seeking ideas from - very much involving staff* (Carol 163-5)

> *"...very supportive (*environment*). As colleagues we have informal chats - just pop into each other's office and say - if something's really stressing us out and things like that. Also the chief executive's (*female*) very accessible. There's a lot of care of the individual here...."* (Carol 183-7)

"It's not really competitive ....it's much more that everyone sees themselves as working to a common goal - and the common goal is the improvement and the interests of the children - so it's not the improvement of any particular group and there's a lot of interdependencies between the different sections which is quite positive.. And I think that people generally feel positive about it - that's my impression" (Barbara 157-173)

Acceptance of women in senior positions was important in helping women to feel valued and at ease. In both the charity and the NHS trust, the high number of women in senior positions was a key factor. However, policies to actively promote women's interests were cited by both women as evidence of the supportive and accepting environment in which they worked. In the NHS trust this amounted to the rigorous application of equal opportunities policies so as to provide a level playing field for women in which the best person, irrespective of gender, was appointed for the job. For the charity more active policies were in place in addition to equal opportunities:

"We have things like childcare allowances for staff - we have numbers of staff who have children - so they're well catered for in terms of childcare needs - we have dependent leave. Those sorts of things create a culture where women are not picked off as being different or a nuisance because of their other responsibilities" (Barbara 158-60).

Characteristics of this culture, therefore, included an atmosphere of inclusion rather than exclusion, supportive networks, a sense of a common goal, a lack of

competitiveness and specific policies that value women in the organisation.

Neither of the two women in this category had experienced career barriers in their present organisation but admitted to problems in previous employment or during external meetings. Carol had been passed over for promotion in her previous employment and had become blocked in an administrative post while Barbara had experienced a 'Men's Club' attitude at off site meetings:

> *"It's always at its most obvious at conferences that the socialising activities go in male clusters and unless you know one of those men specifically in those clusters in which case you can join, you can't - there's a clear message that you don't just walk up or if you do they change the conversation - and there's all sorts of the usual assumptions like you don't know about football which is what they want to talk about. Or don't know about certain things of interest to them or they apologise if any of them swear - all that kind of stuff that says we recognise you as different from us therefore we're going to behave differently towards you"* (Barbara 186-193)

Being part of a supportive culture did not mean a problem free working life however. Barbara experienced some conflict within her organisation concerning 'old' versus 'new' managerialism where the new managerialism was aligned with Tory values of markets and marketisation. Her MBA was seen by some as symptomatic of her sympathy for this 'new' approach so that she was viewed "as a bit of a deserter". Carol had experienced difficulties with a junior male member of her staff who was

uncooperative and occasionally hostile. Both worked hard, putting in long hours, and both felt the pressure to perform in an environment that was rapidly changing.

8.2.2.2 Partial Organisational Fit

Six women were identified as having a 'partial fit' with their organisation and organisational culture. Whilst variously claiming that the culture was "supportive", "good" or "friendly" they at the same time experienced some unease or described situations where they had felt different or out of place. In other words there were some contradictions between their descriptions of the organisational culture and their actual experience. While not encountering open hostility, they felt that they did not belong and that the culture did not fully support them.

All six women worked for service sector industries. Three of these were in the private sector (a travel company , a bank and a private hospital) and three were in the public sector (civil service, NHS authority and university library). Four worked in organisations where there was an even gender mix in the organisation as a whole but where men predominated at senior levels. Three of the women were the only women at their level and one woman worked in a mostly female section (a library) but had dealings with other more male dominated departments (university faculties). All women, therefore, worked in organisations that were male dominated at senior levels to a greater or lesser extent though the gender mix further down the hierarchy was more balanced. All experienced some form of tension in their experience of the organisational culture.

Maura

Maura worked as a marketing manager in a private hospital. She described the culture at her level as "friendly" and "supportive" but admitted that at the corporate (ie senior level) it was " a bit of all boys and back slapping" where it was " hard for a woman to break in". She had her own friends and a supportive network, but found the culture highly competitive and "macho". She enjoyed her work, however, though the competitive and "cut throat" environment put her under extreme pressure to perform and to meet targets (Maura 192-194). Maura's tensions, therefore, lay in a mismatch between an inclusive atmosphere at her level and a pervasive insecurity occasioned by a competitive atmosphere and the pressures of meeting performance targets. Maura was a single parent and the demands of the job were often in conflict with her desire to spend time with her son.

Susan

Susan described a divide in culture within the same organisation which appeared to depend on gender mix. Within her own almost entirely female section, a library, the culture was "supportive and non competitive" (Susan 126-7). Problems arose with her dealings with other male dominated sections where she found the culture much more competitive and where her formal authority was frequently challenged by junior male staff :

"In the university as a whole I would say there's a lot more competitive -

much more politics going on amongst teaching staff in particular...a lot more power play" (Susan140-143)

"I've have always found that as a woman manager I have to be very assertive and stand up for my rights otherwise there are a number of males...who will try to ignore, sideline or say always you've got to refer to the Head of Department. That's at all levels - even quite junior males - stationery or furniture and think I should refer to the Head of Building Service" (Susan 161-167)

While Susan claimed that she had experienced no barriers in her career in the library sector and while the atmosphere within the university library was inclusive and supportive, her authority was challenged outside that department and she felt keenly that she was excluded from key decision making processes at an informal level. Susan therefore experienced contradictions and tensions between her own department and the wider culture of the organisation.

Wendy

Wendy, while claiming to work in a gender neutral environment where she had experienced no discrimination or career barriers of any kind, went on to describe at a later point in the interview a paternalistic culture similar to the "Gentleman's Club" as discussed by Maddock and Parkin (1994). Here women are kept within firmly established roles by courteous and civilised male managers. Wendy (a middle

manager) had been protected from some of the tough restructuring that had occurred within the bank but had remained within an unchallenging role:

> *"Probably I get more consideration (* as a woman*) like they wouldn't shout at me or anything like that. On the bad side I get the impresson not so much is expected of me. I possibly get an easier ride"* (Wendy 88-91)

Wendy had progressed to management through the relatively unusual route of secretarial work. As well as having an undemanding role within a protective, paternalistic environment, Wendy also suffered a credibility problem which she related to her background as a P.A. For some time after her promotion to management, male managers continued to ask her to perform routine secretarial work such as typing. Her previous claim, therefore, that the organisational culture was gender neutral did not fully fit in with her experiences

Maggie

Maggie, a senior manager of a travel company, described her organisation as "very friendly". She felt she had personal networks which provided valuable support. Later in the interview, however, she discussed some of the problems of being the only woman at her level (women were well represented up to middle management) which meant she had to separate herself from (male) colleagues and not take this friendliness too far:

"But I think one of the things I've found here (working with men) *I have to be a lot more careful and keep my social life absolutely separate. It is perfectly possible to have platonic friendships but there's always the possibility of it being misconstrued."* (Maggie 151-157;)

"I never drink anything.I always go home after do's early. I just make sure I never put myself in a position where there could be a difficulty" (Maggie 189-90)

"You tend to keep the personal side of your life very separate and don't let it interfere." (Maggie 299-300)

Such "policing" of discourse and relationships to avoid the possibility of their becoming or being seen as sexualised is seen by Sheppard (1989) as nearly always the responsibility of women, who embody the emotional and sexualised aspects of organisations, rather than of men who symbolise gender neutral rationality. How women "manage" the world of the organisation is discussed more fully in Chaper Nine (section 9.4.4). One outcome, however, according to Acker (1992) is that women have to constantly challenge stereotypical images of themselves as the embodiment of the emotional and the illogical as well of the sexual. Maggie was watchful that any vulnerablitiies on her part were carefully hidden:

"You really don't feel that you can put a foot wrong or do anything that would ever be considered a female thing - being considered emotional, being

anything other than entirely logical and rational in your arguments" (Maggie 286-289)

"I always feel I've got to get all my facts absolutely there....I've made loads of mistakes but I keep them quiet....I try not to show any (vulnerability)" (Maggie 341)

Maggie therefore experienced some contradiction in how she "read" the organisational culture and her actual experience. While she described the culture as supportive and friendly, she needed to carefully manage that friendliness as well as to manage her own presentation of self to avoid stereotypical and damaging labelling that might be attached to her as a woman manager.

Jackie

Jackie, married with young children and the only woman at her level, had earlier described herself as "lucky" in that her organisation was "open to both sexes" where she had not experienced discrimination of any kind. However, like Maggie, she felt constrained by the need to challenge stereotypical views of women managers, and like Maura she experienced conflicts between the demands of home and work. In Jackie's case, the stereotype concerned women's domestic role and their unsuitability for senior management positions:

"I don't feel I can bring home to work and talk about it because I do feel that

in people's minds that will create an impression of me - all those bloody women in here, all they want to do is whinge about what they've got to do at home".(Jackie 235-8)

A culture of long hours and an increased work load had intensified feelings of conflict:

"The working culture here is that it's accepted that if something needs doing for 9 tomorrow morning you'll do it...and it doesn't matter if you've got to sit at home and do it in the evening" (Jackie 168-70)

The organisation had not, however, considered the extra pressures these demands might be making on staff with children:

"I won't compromise my time with the children so what I do is I'll spend time with the kids and they go to bed at 8.30 or whatever and then at 9 I sit down and I start working and I really begrudge" Jackie (173 -6)

As the only woman at that level in her section, this was a problem which she was unable to discuss or share with other colleagues. The need to fit into the organisation meant that she was effectively silenced on this issue.

"And because just in this particular area I work with men there isn't another woman at my level in this area - and because my boss is a man I can't say

and I won't say Oh I'm really sick of working and doing all this evening work because I want to spend time with my kids because I'm very aware of the fact that if you start raising family commitments then people may very well think Oh that's women. You know - that's the problem when you get women working in well paid jobs and so on" (Jackie 182-188)

Managing her femaleness, in this instance, meant denial of her family responsibilities so that work and home were separated to the extent that family concerns were excluded from general discourse within the organisation. In fact, Jackie was considering leaving the organisation because of work pressures and the difficulties of accommodating the conflicting demands made upon her . A contradiction therefore existed between her earlier assertion that the organisation was gender neutral and her experience as a woman senior manager.

Kim

Kim was on the 'fast track' career path of the civil service and had moved frequently from one department to another. She had been in her present position for only 9 months and this may explain the difficulty she had describing the culture of her organisation. Although the culture was referred to as "good", she did not appear to benefit from friendships or from supportive networks. Her description of the culture confined itself to the reward system which she felt was fair and helped those willing to work hard to progress. However, she revealed very little about herself in the course of the interview and confined herself mainly to descriptions of her career

path. It was therefore difficult to place her in any category of organisational fit. However, she did not experience any of the positive aspects that one might expect from women who had good organisational fit such as mutual support and friendships. In fact, the need to perform consistently well in order to justify her 'fast track' position and to reach targets emerged as a particular pressure which lead to admitted costs in terms of personal and family life. These tensions suggested that she should be placed in the 'partial fit' category.

A 'partial organisational fit', therefore, occurs when women experience some conflict or discomfort whilst claiming to feel generally at ease within the organisational culture. Such a mismatch between experience and rationalisation of that experience is not uncommon especially, according to Symons (1992) in organisations which have a formal equal opportunities policy and which have generally been seen to have "taken care" of gender issues. This encourages the view that the organisation is gender neutral ("we treat everyone strictly on merit here"). Women may therefore take on face value a gender neutral organisational logic which only under subsequent probing proves to be unsatisfactory. At the same time, although women are generally seen as being more aware of organisational cultures than men simply because they are more likely to be disabled by it (Maddock & Parkin, 1994), this does not mean that all women will have the language or the analytical skills to be able to stand outside their culture, as it were, and critically examine it. With the exception of Kim, who at middle management level worked with men and women in equal proportions, all the women in the partial fit category were in the minority at their level but with greater proportions of women lower down

the hierarchy. While this pattern of gender mix may not be a contributory factor to their experience, a comparison with women in the poor fit category highlights some important differences and sheds some light on the significance of gender mix at senior and at more junior levels of the organisation.

8.2.2.3 Poor Organisational Fit

Four women were categorised as having a poor or unsatisfactory fit with the organisation. They openly expressed their feelings of isolation and marginalisation and were critical of the prevailing values which they did not share. They were excluded from certain aspects of organisational life and in two cases experienced overt harrassment. All four women worked in male dominated organisations or departments, three of which were in the private sector and one in the public sector. In all cases they were exceptions. Other women in the organisation tended to occupy traditional roles such as administrative or secretarial staff.

Several common features emerged in terms of the characteristics of the culture as described by the women themselves. Key descriptions included "competitive", "territorial" "aggressive" (Bronach), "antagonistic" "anti-woman" "political" (Amanda) "bullying" "macho" (Ann, Caroline) "gung-ho" "slap on the back" "teamy" "boyish" "unsafe" (Caroline). The following quotes illustrate ways in which the culture was experienced by the four women concerned:

Bronach

Bronach was a middle manager in a large organisation that had experienced considerable restructuring over a 5 year period. She was the only woman at her level and her contact was mainly with male managers or male technical staff. She was openly critical of the culture and its values which she described as highly competitive

> *"It's not a sharing culture at all... There's a lot of time wasted in little territorial battles and that tends to be quite aggressive. It's very male dominated. It's very much we want to do this. An awful lot of not talking to people"* (Bronach 370-378)

Competition centred around ownership of tasks or projects with each person or team attempting to claim a project or task as their own. There was little if any sharing of ideas or consultation. Bronach described a situation where she advocated some consultation with another department:

> *"I have had difficulties in my unit because I'll say, look if we start doing that we're going to encroach on this - do you think we should go and see these people and tell them we're doing it and we can agree on whether they do it or we do it. And the line is, we'll sort that out when the time comes. When it becomes an issue we'll sort it out. And I think well why let it become an issue...but that's just the way the culture is because you can't be seen to be*

relying on anyone else or dependent on other people. You have to be able to demonstrate you can do this all yourself. So there's an awful ot of jockeying for position" (Bronach 381-392).

This could well be linked to organisational restructuring in which flatter organisations are characterised by territoriality and greater competition over reduced promotion opportunities (Clark, 1994). Competition over ownership of projects and an attitude of non cooperation may be symptomatic of insecurity and the need to demonstrate visible commitent to the job to stave off the threat of future redundancies and to be well placed for any promotion opportunities. Whatever the reason, Bronach felt that not only did she did not share the values of the organisational culture but that she felt alienated and isolated by them.

2 Ann

Ann was the only departmental head in a boy's comprehensive, where the majority of teaching staff were male. She described a bullying culture where she felt threatened and unsafe. Any challenge to the prevailing attitudes frequently lead to the accusation of professional incompetence from male managers more senior to herself

"..it's a male dominated closed culture...bullying is common and what they do is they say you can't manage your class. It's not at all supportive" (Ann 29)

Sexist comments by both boys and male staff were commonplace and there was a general feeling that this was acceptable because women had to be "tough enough and had to cope with it". The few women on the staff attempted to keep a low profile and policed their sexuality by dressing carefully and monitoring social interaction and discourse. Ann felt threatened by the bullying attitide of senior personnel and by the machismo culture that pervaded the school.

Amanda

Amanda was a senior sales manager in a small organisation, the only woman at her or any other level except for secretarial staff. The atmosphere of the organisation had radically changed with the arrival of a new managing director. Whereas before his appointment she felt valued and was given large amounts of responsibility, these responsibilities were now being taken away and her new manager made it clear that he did not want a woman on his team. While unable to fault her work (the sales team she headed was a successful one) he used various strategies to marginalise and exclude her.

One strategy was to exclude her from any informal social activities that he himself arrranged. He frequently played golf and had lunch with other male managers at her level. The day of our interview, Amanda had tried to redress this and to make an informal arrangement for lunch:

"Like today I went to see him and because in all the time he's been here he's

never been to lunch with me, never had an informal meeting with me. He'll only like have formal meetings yet he does with all the other people. And I went to see him and said it's a nice day how about lunch and he said too busy...so it's not as if I haven't tried" (Amanda 222-227)

Such exclusion made her acutely aware of her "difference" as a woman manager and of the ambivalence felt towards her. A second strategy used by the managing director (her line manager) was to reduce her status through sexual innuendo. This will be discussed in more detail in a later section but it is interesting to note at this stage how powerful men can use sexuality to disempower women, particularly senior women (Cockburn, 1991). In the above example the MD commented, as she turned to leave his office , on the attractive appearance of Amanda's secretary who had just walked past the open door:

"I couldn't believe it. What did that mean do you think? That I'm not worth going to lunch with and that in any case my secretary is more attractive....?" (Amanda 228-230)

As Cockburn (1991) points out, potentially powerful women must be cut down to size by sexual means. She refers to it as a "controlling gesture" which diminishes any sense of power the woman might be acquiring and reminds her " 'you're only a woman, that's the way I see you.' " (p142)

Whilst commenting on a secretary's appearance to a third person might not in itself

be seen as sexual harrassment, in this context it served as a reminder to Amanda firstly of her reduced status as a woman and secondly on the basis of that reduced status which values physical appearance above anything else, of a higher value accorded to a junior member of her own staff..

A third strategy was to exclude Amanda from formal meetings involving members of her own sales team, thereby reducing her credibility as a manager in their and other's eyes:

> *"...he (*MD*) just pulls in all my people so he's eroding any credibility that I have. So already my guys during this week he's called them all in individually and he just doesn't think that I should be told or involved which makes my job very difficult"* (Amanda 132-6)

Although her area was a successful one, she knew she had been identified as "grey" ie unsatisfactory in some way, and that the men at her level " who aren't even performing" were seen as more acceptable. In this instance, a hostile working environment was created for the woman manager largely by one individual which then influenced aspects of the organisational culture by legitimising certain types of behaviour and attitudes.

Caroline

The power of key individuals to determine the culture of a department or section was

highlighted by Caroline, senior marketing manager of a large private sector organisation. Like Bronach, she was the only woman at her level and most of her dealings were with other male managers and male technical staff. She commented:

> *"It (*the culture*) varies according to where you work. I've worked in areas where I would describe it as being macho...I find where I am now very much jovial and if you like quite macho, quite sort of gung-ho. The point I'm trying to make is I haven't found one culture in our business. It's pockets and a lot of it is influenced by the leaders - the formal leaders - but on a day to day basis"* (Caroline 266-271)

Where formal leaders are male and where male values receive fertile ground in terms of being accepted by the next layer down, this might be a decisive factor in the culture. For Caroline the formal leaders had created a jokey atmosphere which was, in fact, unsafe particularly for women:

> *"It's not safe - no, no - one has to be on the defense all the time and ready to put up your case or respond and if ever you don't quite feel brilliant one day...you could find you've got a problem because you get lots of comments you're not ready to respond to"* (Caroline 283-287)

Like Bronach, Caroline was openly critical of the organisational culture. Unlike Susan and Amanda who appeared defeated by the hostility they experienced, Caroline described the antagonism she encountered with cheerfulness and humour,

though she was clearly worn down by it. She had no friends within her department.

All four women, therefore, who were categorised as having poor organisational fit were openly critical of their organisations and associated culture and practices. They felt largely uncomfortable within their organisational cultures experiencing various degrees of hostility, exclusion or challenges to their authority. The culture was not a safe one and women had to be on their guard to ward off real or potential threats. This contrasts with the six women categorised as having partial fit who described their cultures in supportive terms while experiencing some discomfort or lack of fit. They did not, however, experience overt hostility or exclusion.

In the next section, the three categories of poor, partial and good organisational fit are related to material that emerged on career barriers. A fuller consideration of the implications of organisational structure for the different levels of 'fit' takes place in Chapter Nine (section 9.4.4).

8.3 Career Barriers

8.3.1 Formal and Informal Barriers

The various studies on women's career development have focused on the importance of both formal and informal barriers. Formal barriers include a lack of targets to promote higher female participation in training or a lack of flexible working arrangements. However, as Chapter Three (sections 3.5.3 and 3.6) have discussed,

recent research has concentrated on informal barriers (eg Cockburn, 1991; Ibarra, 1992; Witz, 1993). These are linked to organisational and the wider culture and include sex-role stereotyping, negative attitudes and exclusion from male groups and a male culture. Although the majority of women from this interview sample had experienced some 'formal' barriers in their careers at some stage in the form of blocked promotion, inflexible working arrangements or restricted career structures, in practice it was difficult to separate the two as seemingly 'formal' barriers carried with them a whole range of informal cultural 'baggage'. It was the content of this 'baggage' that women discussed and which captured the essence of their experience.

The organisation - structure approach sees career barriers are inextricably linked to gender cultures. According to Maddock and Parkin (1994) each organisation has its own specific form of gender culture determined by managers and employees with the 'tone' of the organisation usually set by corporate management. Corporate managers, therefore, can play a significant part in creating gender cultures and gender dynamics via their own brand of leadership and their own possible and peculiar resistance to equality proposals or to individual women's advancement. This was borne out to a large extent by the interview data where poor organisational fit was often associated with hostile or ambivalent senior personnel.

8.3.2 The Formal and Informal Organisation

Most of the barriers experienced by the women from this sample can be categorised

as originating or being played out in the formal or informal setting. The formal setting refers to behaviours and situations that occur in the course of performing the duties of the job. In other words this is the setting of the formal organisation. Meetings, conferences and formal interactions of staff are examples of this. In the informal setting, or the informal organisation, networks, alliances and friendships are formed. In the questionnaire, this was captured by the 'Men's Club' concept from which many women felt excluded and which was a popular choice for women as a key barrier experienced. These relationships may well take place within the setting of the organisation (informal office chats, the canteen, the corridoor) or may take place off site (the pub, the golf course). From the interview data, the distinction between the formal and the informal setting emerged as an important one in determining women's experiences.

8.3.3 Organisational Fit and the Formal and Informal Organisation

As we have seen from section 8.2. above, the degree of organisational fit had a strong bearing on how women experienced the informal organisation. Where women experienced a good organisatonal fit the nature of social interaction at the informal level was inclusive. In fact formal and informal structures within the organisation were experienced as having a high degree of synchrony with little, if any, tension between the two.As discussed in section 8.2.2, friendships were formed from within the work setting which were seen and experienced as supportive and inclusive.

Women experiencing a partial or poor organisational fit, on the other hand, encountered different levels of exclusion. Although friendships and a sense of comradeship were formed in the worksetting, these were largely male dominated and exluded women. Women, therefore, were unable to take full part in organisational life and were disadvantaged by having limited access to information, networks and support. Their area of operation was largely limited to the formal organisation.

8.3.4 The Formal Organisation - Meetings

The lack of synchrony between the formal and the informal organisation and the tensions that existed between the two were particularly marked for those women who had a poor organisational fit, though some women in the 'partial fit' category encountered similar situations. In both cases, day to day experience depended largely on whether women were operating within a formal or informal context. Conflict and pressure may be experienced in both but it was in the informal context that women felt more vulnerable. The formal context, by contrast, afforded them some protection. Certain rules of behaviour could be counted on to protect women from tactics of exclusion or demarcation which were commonplace in the informal setting. Meetings were often used during interviews as an example of the formal context. Women felt protected within the context of the meeting - their credentials were accepted and their expertise recognised. At the same time, an organisational commitment to equal opportunities (together with the general constraints that courtesy imposed on public behaviour) meant that overtly sexism was effectively ruled out. Despite the conflict that is often embedded within the social processes of

the meeting and despite the fact that women were usually or always the only woman present, they found the context of the meeting to be a relatively safe one. The following quotes illustrate this idea:

> "*Colleagues are fine because they know and they respect me for what I can do*" (Bronach 279-80)

> " *Yes, I think that because you become an expert in your field that in some ways gives weight to your argument* (in meetings) (Caroline 240-1)

> "*...I'm happy to talk about my views, where I feel people will give equal weight to what I'm saying and take me at face value*" (Heather 133-6)

> "*I don't really take much notice of it (*being the only woman at a meeting) - *no pressure either way. I think it's a matter of practice*" (Wendy 197-8)

Meetings were not entirely problem free, however. Women were aware of having to assert themselves and to get their voice heard:

> "I *quite often go to meetings where there are 20 people and all of them are men.....What I tend to find I tend to be a bit noisy at meetings - and if someone won't listen I'll make them listen*" (Caroline 214-8)

> "*Certainly coming into the NHS I found the number of meetings difficult. The*

large meetings were difficult initially in terms of being able to get your say in. You need to be fairly assertive otherwise you could quite easily not get your opinion across. But gradually with practice the meetings you're at the more you get your opinions across. You learn to stick up for your areas" (Carol 253-256)

For Heather, in her early thirties and a partner in a small company, external meetings ie with outside clients posed a problem as opposed to internal meetings with colleagues who were known to her and where her credentials were recognised. She frequently encountered a dismissive attitude at external meetings:

"Yes, I do feel a bit marginalised. There again there's a distinction between internal meetings where I'm quite happy to talk about my views, where I feel people will give equal weight to what I am saying and take me at face value. But external meetings - yes I'll put forward my ideas and then the conversation will come back round to it later and someone else will put forward the idea and somehow it will get a little bit more discussed. The idea's not rejected it's just that it has to be re-presented by someone else to be validated" (Heather 132-142)

Older men were seen as being particularly patronising:

"I'm 31 and there's a certain element when I go to these meetings...well you're young enough to be my daughter...and because I'm not aggressive...I

*can't go through these barriers (*being marginalised*) to find out what's going on*" (Heather 123-127)

Bronach, referring to external meetings with suppliers, made a similar comment:

> *"And some of them I find - particularly the older ones - can be very dismissive. What's it got to do with you? What do you know about it? What are you doing here sort of thing"* (Bronach 234-237)

She went on:

> " *I've no problems with the people I'm working closely with. You don't get the same level of disrepect or arrogance* (as with outsiders)" (Bronach 271-3)

Even in internal meetings, however, women had to be well prepared. Being in the minority meant that they were highly visible and had to give a good performance. It was important therefore that they came to meetings well briefed. To be seen to be asking too many questions was considered undesirable if a woman manager wished to avoid the role of "scatty female". Bronach commented:

> *"And it (*being the only woman*) puts quite a lot of pressure on me I think because I feel well should I say that? Am I just going to antagonise people here or have I absolutely got my facts right. It means I won't come out and say something I'm not entirely sure of or I won't ask a question if it's a*

question for information because I'll be afraid of looking stupid" (Bronach 245-253)

Susan, deputy head librarian, made a similar point:

"*When I'm with the heads of department (*in a meeting*) I feel I need to be careful that any points that I'm making are worth making rather than just talking for the sake of it. I'm happy to be in those contacts but I'm conscious that if you don't know what the politics are you can look very naive*" (Susan 220-224)

Jackie recognised this to be a gender issue and maintained that she would behave differently in a more sex integrated environment:

"*..if it was a more mixed group I think I'd be a lot more - a lot happier to come out and say I don't understand that or what does that mean. But when you've got a group of men who you can see are quite antagonistic...*" (Jackie, 145-148)

Caroline referred to the need to be constantly sure of her ground because of the pressures of being the only female:

"*If you were put in a situation where you were taking a new job - or even with myself in my next job - don't know much about the area and so on I can*

see it would be quite difficult in an all male environment - until I found my feet and knew what I was doing" (Caroline 244-8)

She concluded at a later stage in the interview:

> *"I think having to prove yourself all the time. Never actually getting to a point where you can say 'been there, done that, reached a level of competence'. That you can actually walk into a meeting without preparing and be very relaxed and just... I'll just go in and say a few words. It's just never like that"* (Caroline 428-432)

Not surprisingly, male managers did not appear to share this pressure. Caroline made the following comment of her male colleagues:

> "*...they (*women) *work extra hard to be sure of the facts to do their analysis. Whereas I notice that the guys will turn up at meetings perhaps and not have a note pad and they'll sit back in the chair and be very relaxed and you know add a few comments here and there. I don't generally notice that with the women. They are better prepared and they do work hard"* (Caroline 384-388)

According to Maddock (1993) men are much more likely to feel in control of meetings than women and to display dominance and confidence through body language - such as leaning backwards in their chairs, having outstretched arms or rocking backwards and forwards. Not having a notepad could, in itself, be an overt

display of confidence and of a cavalier attitude designed to enhance status.

Generally speaking, however, women did not experience problems in the formal context of meetings especially when those meetings were internal and did not involve external personnel. Many women commented on the respect they felt they commanded with their fellow colleagues and on the credibility they had in terms of their expertise in their chosen fields. They may not display the same levels of confidence as men and experience their situations as less powerful and they were careful to be well prepared and not to ask too many questions. However, there was no evidence to suggest that women managers were disadvantaged or marginalised within the context of the internal meeting. The meeting, an important part of the formal organisation, was therefore generally seen as a relatively safe environment.

None of the men interviewed experienced the context of the meeting as problematic.

8.3.5 The Informal Organisation

While women may experience some difficulty within the context of the meeting, their sense of their own vulnerability and disadvantage emerged more fully as they discussed aspects of the informal organisation. Firstly women were less able to take part in the "politics" of decision making, much of which occurred informally in offices, corridors or down the pub. For example, following on from the above discussion on the formal context of the meeting, several women discussed the difficulties they experienced in the social interactions that took place outside.

"It's not just in the meetings but it's afterwards as well. It'll be casual things like they'll disappear off to the loo together and you miss a lot of the gossip" (Bronach 287-8)

"It's the standing around with the sandwiches. I mean I dread it. I hate it. In meetings you're pursuing a particular objective. Superficiality and networking I find difficult. But that's the real business - handing out cards and things like that....I don't like this sort of if I scratch your back you'll scratch mine... "(Heather 168-175)

"The goings on after meetings - some of the informal discussion afterwards - yes can be a bit difficult. Or more so I found some of the stuff that goes on before the meeting - the hidden agendas and the fact that one or two people perhaps have neen nobbled before the meeting and being aware of who influences who and who's likely to have had a word with somebody and smoothed something through. That was very difficult to suss out initially" (Carol 258-64)

Secondly, women felt less protected in the informal environment as it was in these settings that patriarchal strategies of exclusion tended to occur. Here there were no protective rules of behaviour and it was in these settings that women felt vulnerable. Men tended to display more macho behaviour in the informal context where women frequently were belittled or marginalised. Referring to sexist comments that she frequently received concerning her appearance or concerning

suppositions of sexual relations with male colleagues, Caroline noted:

> "*But again (*these happen) *in the informal environment, not in meetings. I think people can be a lot cheekier in the informal environment*" (Caroline 289-291)

She went on:

> *"I suppose to sum it up I find people less patronising or this joviality or anything at meetings - it's outside that you tend to find that*" (Caroline 234-5)

> *"So I still find on a day to day basis probably more so with my closer working colleagues than perhaps in meetings that one does get a fair few comments that are quite frankly unacceptable*" (Caroline 192-4)

The processes referred to by Kanter (1977) of assimilation (whereby negative stereotypes are attached to the minority group) and polarisation (whereby boundaries between the dominant and the minority are heightened) may well occur within the informal setting rather than the formal context. Male collusion or resistance to women via sexist or 'men's club' type behaviour discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.6) is therefore characteristic of the informal organisation.

8.4 The Men's Club Revisited

As Chapter Two (section 2.2.12) and Chapter Three (section 3.5.2) have discussed, one way of gaining insight into the informal organisation and the politics of the organisation is through informal networking. This is important not simply in terms of gathering up to date information but also in terms of establishing relations, evaluating colleagues and obtaining feedback on work related issues. The so called 'Men's Club' is a central feature of the informal structure (Marshall, 1984; 1992) and is one from which women are often excluded. It may not be surprising, therefore, as one woman manager put it, women are "no good at the politics side of things" and that the power play of the workplace often eludes them.

8.4.1 The Men's Club and Good Organisational Fit

Women who experienced a 'good organisational fit' worked in non profit making organisations that had an even gender mix or that was predominantly female at every level of the hierarchy. The two women in this category did not encounter exclusion or marginalisation by men within their own work context though one woman had encountered such behaviour at offsite conferences.

8.4.2 The Men's Club and Partial Organisational Fit

Women who had a 'partial organisational fit' worked in organisations that, with the exception of Kim, were characterised by a gender imbalance at senior levels but a

more balanced gender mix further down the hierarchy. They were service industry workers though there as an even mix between public and private sectors. Women in this category discussed problems that pertained to their organisational culture as discussed earlier in section 8.2.3 rather than problems of overt hostility or exclusion. As such, the disadvantages they experienced could be described as 'oblique' in that they did not encounter deliberate attempts to marginalise or isolate them but worked in a culture which reflected male values and attitudes. Consequently, women felt a need to keep a distance with male colleagues in order to 'police' potential sexualisation of relationships, to cope with long hours and to deny the existence of domestic commitments, to impose authority on reluctant or hostile junior male staff, to perform and to deliver in a competitive and macho environment, and to counteract the effects of a paternalistic culture that supported underperformance and underachievement. Only one woman in this category referred to the exclusiveness of male networks and this was Susan, the deputy librarian who had in the course of her job to manage her own female team and to liaise with other male dominated departments. It was in the context of her dealings with these external departments that such difficulties occurred:

> *"One thing that I'm very conscious of is that J (*male boss*) frequently goes out drinking with the boys at night - the pub - and that's the sort of situation where I would feel less inclined to go...he goes out of work reasons to get things done and to find out what's going on. But most of these are almost entirely all male sessions. Because they're all there - it's quite potent. There's a curious sort of drinking club atmosphere which women are not so*

*comfortable with".(*Susan 234-9)

She went on :

> *"..and I think I would find it quite awkward to walk up to a group of males and say can I have a drink with you if they were just work colleagues and I wasn't particularly friendly with any of them. Whereas certainly J feels quite happy to go in and see what's going on 'cos he's heard something. He'll say I'll just go down the pub tonight and find out what's going on and get the low down on it"* (Susan 241-7)

Maggie had been criticised by her line manager in her previous organisation for not adopting a more informal style:

> " *Certainly my boss in the City, he did an awful lot of business down the wine bar or down the pub.* And *he was critical of me for not socialising enough because that's the way he operated - but that's not my style and I said I believe I can be just as effective as you without having to tip down six pints of lager in the process"* (Maggie 315-21)

Apart from these two exceptions, both of which related to departments or organisations external to their present posts, it was those women who had a 'poor organisational fit', rather than partial fit, who discussed the 'Men's Club' as particularly problematic.

8.4.3 The Men's Club and Poor Organisational Fit

Women who came into the category of poor organisational fit worked in organisations (mainly private sector) that were male dominated at every level of the hierarchy and where, apart from themselves, women tended to occupy traditionally female roles. Women in this category encountered various forms of exclusion and marginalisation which were chararcteristic of 'Men's Club' behaviour. This refers to the tendency of men to form informal groups and networks which are dominated by male norms and values. As part of the group culture, men can be active, in a variety of ways, in strategies of resistance whereby men maintain their sense of 'owning' the organisation (Cockburn, 1991). Two levels of resistance were encountered by women experiencing poor organisational fit. Firstly women encountered *oblique practices* which served to exclude and marginalise them, similar to the tactics encountered by women with partial fit and which formed part of the organisational culture. The difference here, however, was that women expressed few contradictions in describing their experiences and were aware and critical of the more oblique strategies used against them. These strategies were generally seen as symptomatic of a male culture which was competitive and which highlighted women's sense of isolation and difference. The following quotes illustrate women's sense of marginalisation:

> *"Well they tend to go drinking a lot more. They tend to meet up more like that and women aren't invited..."* (Bronach 315-7)

"..men do seem to have this slap on the back culture a bit more - and quite teamy in terms of let's go down the pub, boyish thing to do" (Caroline 322-4)

For another woman manager the "informal infrastructure" of golf and lunches from which she was excluded added to a sense of isolation. After her unsuccessful attempt to persuade her boss to meet informally for lunch (referred to in section 8.2.4 above), she ended rather sadly:

"I suggested going to lunch because I'd never been - but one of the other managers went on Wednesday and they played golf afterwards, so that's more....I don't play golf" (Amanda 477-9)

"Drinking with the boys" was recognised as an important way of being part of the network, even though none of the women interviewed actually took part in such sessions. The costs of exclusion were generally felt to be high. Bronach pointed out that the "meaningful" social chitchat was put on hold while women were around:

"And sometimes I find that some of the casual chat when you chat either before or after a meeting or you just run into somebody in the corridor it can be very banal...the chit chat isn't on a level they'll talk to with male colleagues. It tends to be very - they'll talk about the weather - I don't know..." (Bronach 291-5)

With the men, however, informal discussions were more "meaningful" in that they

covered key topics concerning the internal politics and power play of the organisation:

> *"..there's a lot more about the - the meaningful gossipy sort of thing that you get in companies about who's doing what and what they think is going to happen in terms of reorganisation. Who's likely to get that job sort of thing..."* (Bronach 299-302)

Several women commented on the disadvantage and discomfort they felt in terms of attempting to overcome their lack of access to networks and to "suss out" the politics of the organisation. Informal networking was something that women found difficult and was something they had to work at, almost as if they were acquiring a new skill. Carol commented:

> *"I am now..(*more comfortable with networking*)...it's taken the last couple of years to get that - to really start working like that and focusing on it and thinking I really need to be doing that - sort of using those influences"* (Carol 273-5*)*

For Bronach, who worked in a large organisation that had seen massive restructuring, reduced promotion opportunities meant a greater value was placed on informal networking. It was in this context that one heard of new projects and opportunities and made contacts with appropriate people ie those strategically placed to advance one's cause.

"It means then you've got a much closer relationship with some people - and if there's a problem or if there's an opportunity then they'll go to the person they know better which is likely to be another man because that's who they go drinking with" (Bronach 338-42)

Jobs and promotions , she suggested, were allocated on this informal basis rather than through the formal recruitment or promotion procedures:

" Particularly because the company's downsizing and there are very few formal opportunities to apply for jobs now, a lot of the changes in jobs and promotions tends to be done on who you know and who knows you because people tend to get asked to do something now rather than a job being advertised and people applying for it" (Bronach 349-355)

Being in "the know", therefore, was important in terms of gaining insight into the politics of the organisation. It is on this basis that managers are able to evaluate colleagues and gain feedback on work related issues. Not knowing the politics of the organisation could, as Susan pointed out, make one look "naive" but as Amanda acknowledged, gaining access to such information was particularly difficult for women who were often excluded from communication networks.

Secondly, women in the 'poor organisational fit' category encountered *overt practices* of hostility and resistance. These comprised strategies of exclusion involving hostility and/or sexist behaviour on the part of individual men or groups

of men. These dynamics varied from organisation to organisation but all involved sexist, bullying or hostile behaviour.

Caroline encountered sexism disguised as excessive joviality. She and other women were subject to jokes which, while targetting both men and women, were always perpetrated by men. Kanter found similar behaviour patterns in her study at Indsco in which she found that jokes performed a "loyalty test" for the dominant group of men, testing token women's loyalty to men and their acceptance of their own category's (ie women's) inferior status. Women who refused to take the joke were not seen as good team workers and were isolated as a result. Caroline commented:

> *"My last boss, before he left, he gave me some advice which was to lighten up. He would come over and he would joke and joke and joke with the boys and if the girls didn't respond in the same way - he would think, well, that person isn't particulalrly OK or doesn't have a sense of humour"* (Caroline 336-341)

Being considered "OK" and a good team worker meant accepting or conforming to such behaviour even though it may be offensive:

> *"*(The) *banter of working life...is to do with jokes and such and they don't really know where to draw the line. What jokes are acceptable. And there's always the - if you don't laugh at their jokes - if they're slightly sexist and so on then you're not part of the team*" (Caroline 185-90)

Acceptance into the group, therefore, involved conforming to the group's values which included acceptance of women's reduced status. However, acceptance into the group could never be complete because of gender:

> *"I'm not part of the culture but I'm on the periphery - so I've sort of got a sense of humour...as a female I could never be totally part of it anyway...I try to accept it but it's kind of humiliating sometimes.."* (Caroline 359-361)

The cost of not partaking in the "banter" could be a high one. Caroline told the story of another senior woman manager who had worked at the same level as herself and who had refused to take part in any of the office banter and humour. As a result she became the focus of offensive jokes made by both colleagues and her line managers. The fact that she "wouldn't joke with anyone" soured her relations with male colleagues so that she had " clashes with all the chaps and had to leave".

Although jokes covered a variety of topics, they frequently dwelt on areas of vulnerability . As such Caroline considered the environment to be an unsafe one. In order to protect herself, she became defensive and revealed as little as possible about her personal life:

> *"One has to be on the defense all the time and ready to put up your case or to respond and if ever you don't feel quite brilliant one day or you can't be bothered with it - you could find you have a problem because you get lots of comments you're not ready to respond to"* (Caroline 283-7)

"If anything unpleasant happened to you you would be very hesitant to tell these people because you woud feel they would start to poke fun - make jokes" (Caroline 312-4)

Overt resistance, therefore, may take the form of excessive joviality and banter which then can act as an important criteria for exclusion, delineating women as outsiders if they fail to fully participate. Full acceptance, however, is not possible. As Cockburn suggests, men bond with each other through such behaviour and this reinforces their morale and solidarity often directly at the expense of women. This process is also referred to by Maddock & Parkin (1994) who discusses sexual innuendo as part of her analysis of the "Locker Room", a culture which excludes women and where men build relationships on the basis of common agreements and common assumptions. Men in this culture frequently talk about sport and make sexual references to confirm their heterosexuality and to exclude women. So while for women the ability to laugh at their own expense is an important criteria of acceptance which ultimately impacts on the nature of working relationships, such acceptance is only superficial.

Much of the banter referred to above involved an element of sexual innuendo which can be seen as an element of sexual harrassment. This has been defined as:

"All those actions and practices by a person or group of people at work which are directed at one or more workers and which: are repeated and

unwanted; may be deliberate or done unconsciously; cause humiliation, offence or distress; may interfere with job performance or create an unpleasant working environment; comprise remarks or actions associated with a person's sex; emphasise a person's sexuality over her role as a worker" (Hadjifoutiou 1983)

In Caroline's case, sexual innuendo took the form of unwelcome comments of a sexual nature (eg on physical appearance or inferences of sexual relations with colleagues and line managers) and was part of the humour and ribaldry that characterised the working culture. This tactic served to bond men together and to exclude women.

A second example of sexual innuendo/harrassment involved a more personal attack on the status and power of Amanda, senior marketing manager of an oil company. Here her sexual attractiveness was compared unfavourably and openly by her male boss to other female members of staff, all secretaries and including Amanda's own PA (see also section 8.2.4). This implied to her that her seniority was of little consequence against the greater value placed on her physical appearance. This seems to be a good example of how, as Cockburn (1991), points out "emergent and potentially powerful women....must be cut down to size by sexual means" (Cockburn, p141). Amanda, under her previous boss, had been given large areas of responsibility and had been apparently groomed for an even higher position. Under the new leadership, these responsibilities had been subsequently taken away. While her power and status were being eroded formally through diminished responsibilities,

this was underpinned by a strategy of sexual innuendo/harrassment which also enhanced her boss's sense of sexual and organisational power, which Collinson and Collinson (1995) see as inextricably linked.

Although Amanda had been subject to a variety of exclusion tactics referred to earlier (section 8.2.4) and which may be described as forming part of an oblique resistance, two instances came under the overt level of hostile or sexist behaviour. In the first, while rejecting an informal invitation to lunch, the MD had commented on the attractive appearance of Amanda's secretary (also referred to in section 8.2.4) as she had walked past the open door of his office. In the second, a more public judgement of her sexual attractiveness was made:

> *"When we went to this off site meeting - can you believe it? Experienced managers? Started to rate the women in the organisation on their looks and they rated my secretary and one of the others as first and second and afterwards my boss said to me 'I hope you didn't feel put out. You were discussed but you were number five...'"* (Amanda 424-8)

Cockburn (1991) sees such reminders of men's sexual power as a warning to women who step out of their proper place. Women like Amanda who reach senior positions may therefore be particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment because their presence at that level calls forth new measures of exclusion and reassertion of male supremacy.

In Bronach's case, overt resistance took the form of highly competitive behaviour which was organised around male rivalry for jobs and promotion. This she saw as linked to growing uncertainty over job security as the organisation was extensively restructured. Two main areas of competition emerged. Firstly, there was an element of competition over hours worked with long hours being seen as part of the masculine culture (see section 8.2.4) and as evidence of commitment to the job. Secondly, competition centred around ownership of projects or key tasks and was seen by this woman manager as part of the "jockeying for position" that occurred as men competed over limited promotion opportunities.

The issue of long hours is captured by the following quote:

> "*I think there's also a culture of working long hours and being seen to be working long hours ...And there's this well who's looking over my shoulder sort of thing and am I being seen to be doing enough and it gets quite macho...they all compete with each other sort of thing*" (Bronach 177-8; 190-1)

Restructuring in this organisation was extensive and had taken place in stages over a ten year period. This has been shown to place a double burden on managers through increased workloads (IM, 1996; Wheatley, 1992) and through the need to appear visibly committed to the job to avoid the possibility of further redundancies (Goffee and Scase, 1992; Collinson and Collinson, 1995). At the same time long hours can help to reclaim the organisation as a male preserve and exclude women:

"Most companies have moved away from such things as drinking at lunch times - but people would go out after work and they tend to and it tends to be later on. So it's not would you like to go out after work at half five. It's like when we've finished work maybe at 7 o'clock and it's not the sort of thing I could get into if I've got the children to pick up... " (Bronach 195-8)

Competition over hours worked was not the only area of rivalry between men. A second area of competition concerned the ownership of projects or tasks with managers anxious to display their commitment and their ability to perform effectively. The following quotes from Bronach illustrate this tendency:

"People are more competitive all round and you've got to demonstrate that you can do your job because another 5 people are queuing up for it. It's very much we got to do that - we got to demonstrate we can do that"

"People don't want to accept what anyone else has done. There's an awful lot of work gets redone - everybody does it all over again"

"Everyone is trying to demonstrate that they're doing a good job and it's not a sharing culture at all. You have to be able to demonstrate that you can do this all by yourself. So there's an awful lot of jockeying for position"

"There's lot of time wasted in little territorial battles that tends to be quite aggressive. It's very male dominated. There's not much compromise. It's

very much WE want to do this - a lot of not talking to people"

Territorial battles of this kind may well reflect a heightened competition over career pace as well as an increased emphasis on managerial performance. One way to compete for the few promotion opportunities available would be to claim credit for effective peformance and completion of some task or project. With promotion opportunities in short supply , a competitive edge can be can be gained over colleagues by finding out about jobs or new responsibilities as early as possible and by speaking to the right people in an informal setting. Informal networking - often taking place late in the evening in the pub - was an important arena for gaining information and promoting oneself to the right people:

> *"..if there's something big - if there's a job coming up or there's a particular piece of work that needs doing who are you going to recommend to your boss? A lot of it is very informal and that's how things get done"*

Promotion too was increasingly allocated by such informal methods rather than being subject to formal channels of recruitment procedures as the quote on page 302 illustrates.

Rivalry between men, caused possibly by uncertainty over job security and reduced opportunity structures, helped to create a culture of aggressive competition and exclusion. All three instances discussed above - of excessive joviality, sexual innuendo and male rivalry - appeared from the interviews to make up a form of

resistance that occurs at a deeper level than more oblique factors which tended to result in feelings of "difference" and isolation. Women were disadvantaged in a more direct way by overt practices of exclusion and sexism and this had a direct impact on how comfortable they felt in their organisational culture.

8.5 Male MBAs and Career Barriers

As section 8.2.2 pointed out, it was not appropriate to categorise the men interviewed according to 'organisational fit'. This was because they generally felt comfortable with the attitudes and practices of their organisation. Similarly, less depth of material emerged when men were asked to describe the types of barriers experienced in their careers. Although some men felt that their careers had been hampered by different circumstances, these did not originate from within the organisation and its structures. In fact there was little in common on which to draw generalisations from the men interviewed except that they described, in accordance with the survey data, more individual or personal factors. For example, Peter discussed the disadvantage incurred of having a Northern accent, John 1 referred to the drawbacks of having a technical background and how this lead him to stay in one post for too long. Steve had a personality clash with his boss in a previous position which he felt had held him back for a while and for James it was the Masons that had, in the past developed a clique. Neither Tim nor John 2 felt they had experienced barriers.

The depth and richness of material elicited from men was therefore not of the same quality as that which emerged from the women during the course of interviews.

While the male sample size may be a factor here, it may be that in this case lack of data is a form of data in itself. If men feel more at home with prevailing norms and values which, as Cockburn (1991) suggests, reflects male values and interests, it is not surprising that men should have difficulty discussing their organisation's culture in any meaningful way, simply because it is the accepted norm and therefore, to some extent, invisible to them. Women on the other hand, are more likely to have a critical and analytical approach because they feel alienated from those norms and values which in turn do not serve their interests. They can therefore 'stand outside' the culture and examine it in a critical manner. The culture is not, therefore, invisible to them.

8.6 The Men's Club and Men

Men were asked in the course of the interview about their networks at work. This did elicit some interesting material in that it confirmed largely what some of the women had been saying about male networks. However, while men tended to describe a Men's Club in terms, for example, after work pub visits where various work issues were aired, they did not see these gatherings as in any way exclusionary. Women were thought to be perfectly free to join these gatherings but were prevented, for example, by their childcare roles. Steve commented on this issue:

> *"I go for drinks after work - but only once or twice a month....The women don't tend to come because they've got kids and all that"* (Steve 96-99)

Peter explained how pub sessions could be used to air grievances and sort out problems:

> *"Sometimes we have been known to resolve issues down the pub, quite informally off site"* (Peter 103-4)

In Peter's case, main topics of conversation were work and sport. No women came on these occasions even though he worked in a section with a fairly even gender mix. When asked about this, he appeared flummoxed:

> *"I think a number of the female staff have children so they go home at a certain time. Others - some of them don't drink".* (Peter 151-2)

Tim, operations manager in a firm producing computer games, discussed the important role the pub and the staff room played in the creation of new ideas for games. This, he was admitted, was exclusive and generally all male. However, he was reluctant to see this as a gender issue:

> *"..the pub stuff does happen and there is a specific clique of people, but the smoke room - you could say there are specfic people there too, but there is also the kitchen where everybody sits and - so you could argue it either way really"* (Tim 263-7)

While these three men described aspects of the Men's Club (its exclusivity, its all

male character, its importance in discussing work related issues) none of them recognised it as such. These groups were seen as "open" to both sexes. Nothing was preventing women from joining if they wanted to - unless they had children or, as Peter pointed out, didn't drink.

A marked contrast, therefore, existed between men and women in terms of how the men's club was described and analysed with women more able to discuss the political dynamics of male networking and the ways in which they were disadvantaged by its exclusivity. However, while from the survey data a large proportion of women have experienced the Men's Club, 8.4% of men claimed they had experienced this as one career barrier and 4.6% of men claimed it was the largest single barrier. This suggests that some men as well as women experience marginalisation and disadvantage through the informal networking of men.

8.7 Summary

The organisational structure approach views organisational culture as inextricably linked to career barriers. While men admitted to certain career barriers they were not, as with women, embedded within the organisational culture and its practices and processes. The concept of 'organisational fit' was used to describe how comfortable women felt within their organisation and its culture. Good organisational fit described a situation where women felt comfortable within their organisational culture. Two women came into this category. In both cases the gender mix at all levels of the organisation was either balanced or female dominated and in both cases

the women concerned worked in the non profit making sector.

Six women experienced a partial organisational fit in that they encountered some discomfort or conflict whilst generally claiming the organisation to be gender neutral and/or free of gender bias. All the women concerned worked in organisations that were male dominated at senior levels, though there was a greater balance further down the hierarchy. There was a 50/50 split between public and private sectors.

Four women who experienced direct hostility and/or aggression were identified as having a 'poor organisational fit'. Here women worked in organisations that were male dominated at all levels and where women occupied traditionally female roles. Three of the four women worked in private sector organisations. The nature of the antagonism encountered varied and included bullying, sexual innuendo/harrassment, the use of jokes and extreme competitiveness which served to exclude, devalue and marginalise women concerned. Such behaviour was frequently associated with hostile or ambivalent key senior personnel.

The disadvantages experienced by women MBAs depended on both the degree of organisational fit and the setting ie whether interaction was in the formal or the informal context. Where women had a good organisational fit, a high degree of synchrony was experienced between the formal and the informal organisation. For women who experienced a partial or a poor organisational fit there was a lack of synchrony between the formal and the informal. In the formal setting women felt relatively safe and were protected by the formal rules of procedure whereas in the

informal context women had no such protection and were vulnerable to hostile or exclusionary behaviour.

While from the questionnaire data, the majority of women had experienced the Men's Club at some stage in their working lives, more complex processes were uncovered by the interview data. Women who experienced a good organisational fit did not discuss the Men's Club or any aspect associated with Men's Club behaviour as something they had encountered in their present position. Women in the partial fit category discussed problems associated with their organisational culture at the oblique rather than at the overt level. For example, women discussed the need to police discourse and the potential sexualisation of relationships, the need to impose authority on ambivalent junior male staff, the need to deliver in a competitive environment. Women in the poor organisational fit category however, while experiencing more oblique tactics of exclusion via male clubbiness and a drinking club atmosphere, also discussed the Men's Club and associated behaviour as an overt strategy of resistance with different levels of hostility and exclusion involved.

While three of the men described the Men's Club in terms of its exclusivity and its role in networking , they did not see it as a source of disadvantage for women or in terms of political dynamics of power and advantage.

CHAPTER NINE

DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

9.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the results from Chapters Five to Eight. It aims to integrate the quantitative data from Chapters Five and Seven with the qualitative data from Chapters Six and Eight and to discuss the findings within the context of recent work in women in management literature. It is organised around the 5 research questions outlined in Chapter One.

9.2 Discussion of Profiles (research question one)

What is the profile of the female MBA graduate and how does this differ from the male MBA graduate and from women managers generally

9.2.1 Family commitments

Question 1 largely relied on quantitative data. This suggests that the profile of the female MBA graduate conforms largely to findings on women managers generally.

She tends to be younger than her male counterpart, more likely to be single and without children. The tendency for women MBAs to be childless was also present for the married sample, although some disparity between the data may be due to the fact that women MBAs were slightly younger than men. Much of this supports White and Cooper's (1995) findings on senior women who, unlike men, delayed marriage and family life in order to concentrate on their careers as well as Coe's (1992) findings on the age difference between male and female senior managers. This age difference was particularly marked in the private sector. However, significant differences in terms of the profile of male and female MBAs emerged only in terms of marriage/family and academic background.

The tendency for women MBAs to be single and childless means that they were less likely to claim a caring responsibility and this was particularly the case for younger women. However, one interesting factor to emerge was the high proportion of men (30%) who had children and yet who claimed to have no caring responsibility. Only 6.1% of women with children made such a claim. As discussed in Chapter Five (section 5.2.4), this may reflect a narrow interpretation of the term "caring responsibility" on the part of male respondents so that this was confined to include only regular daytime care , excluding for example childcare and/or responsibility for children outside normal working hours. Alternatively, it could reflect an attitude that sees responsibility for childcare as ultimately their partner's and not their own. The latter view is supported by Lewis (1991) who argues that expectations about gender roles still follow traditional lines so that women are seen as the primary carer. Men are becoming a little more involved in childcare but it is still women who do most

of the work and this, according to Lewis, contributes greatly to feelings of overload and stress. In Coe's (1992) study, these extra responsibilities were found to have "defeated" many women managers, supporting Beechey's (1977) view that a major factor behind women's disadvantage in the labour market lies in their domestic responsibilities.

This suggests that an analysis of women's labour market position cannot be divorced from a consideration of their domestic roles, even though a high proportion of senior women are likely to be childless. However, no significant difference between the married and the single sample and between women with and women without children were found in this study terms of key area such as management function, management role and pay although a slightly higher proportion of single women were in senior management roles both before and after the MBA compared with the married sample (Chapter Five, section 5.5). It could well be that women overcome the odds against them in terms of adverse career effects of a dual role with considerable determination as evidenced by those women who combined their MBA studies with a work and mother role and who referred to the tenacity that this required (Chapter Six, section 6.3). Other women referred to the twin demands of work and home as particularly stressful especially in circumstances of organisational change and increased managerial workloads, prompting some women to consider leaving the organisation altogether.

Despite the above differences in terms of caring responsibilities, men and women did not differ significantly in terms of the importance they attached to family and

children (Chapter Five, section 5.3.5). The overwhelming majority of men and women with children saw their families and their children as important. The apparent unwillingness of men to admit to a caring responsibility may therefore not reflect a lower priority or importance given to their children but an acceptance of the traditional stereotype referred to above which sees the man as the family provider. Consequently, they may give a greater priority to their own careers over their partner's. This was not, however, explored further in this project as it fell outside the main focus of the research question.

9.2 .2 Educational Background

A second aspect of the profile of male and female MBA graduates considered was education backgound. Some conformity between women MBAs and women managers generally was found in that women MBAs tend to have a higher level of education than men, though the difference was small and not statistically significant.This may reflect a tendency, identified in Dix's study, for women to set themselves higher entry criteria before considering an MBA. Significant differences did emerge in terms of degree subject with women tending to have a background in Arts and Humanities, in accordance with the female population and women managers generally, and men to have a background in Science or Engineering (Chapter Five, section 5.2). This choice of subject could, according to Chapman (1989), give male graduates an advantage over female graduates in terms of career advancement though data from this study on management role and management function prior to the MBA suggests that, although women were more likely to

occupy support functions than men and receive lower pay, they were not significantly disadvantaged in terms of seniority.

9.2.3 Type of Employing Organisation

At work, women MBAs conformed largely with the overall position of women managers. Women tend to be concentrated in the public sector, to be in education or other services and to work full time. Men on the other hand tend to work in the private sector and to be in Manufacturing/Production, Financial Services or Consultancy. Women in the private sector were younger and less likely to be married than men in that sector and than women MBAs generally. They were more dispersed than public sector women in terms of organisational activity, with the latter highly concentrated in Education and Training and Other Services, ie the more 'feminised' services.

9.2.4 Summary

On the basis of the survey data, therefore, few differences emerged between the profile of women MBAs and the profile of women managers generally. However, as expected, key differences emerged between the male MBA sample and the female MBA sample in terms of age, family commitments and organisational activity. Whereas Dix (1992) in her study of MBA students asserted that women MBA students were of a "higher quality and calibre" than the men (although the particular attributes to which she was referring remains unclear) evidence on differences in

skills and attributes does not emerge from this survey. Women MBAs have a slightly higher level of qualification but the difference is not significant. Women also tend to start from a higher base than men in terms of management level so that a higher proportion were in senior management prior to the course, though, again, the difference is not great.

From the interview data, however, some difference did emerge. Women interviewees appeared to have higher levels of responsibilities than men. For example 3 of the six men interviewed were in middle management or technical roles (Steve, John 2 and James) whereas only four of the 16 women interviewed described themselves as middle managers. Women too gave more robust presentations of themselves than men - they appeared strong, enthusiastic and worked hard to overcome some of the difficulties they faced in their working lives. They had a sense of humour. Men were rather drab in comparison. Despite the impressionistic nature of such depictions, and whilst acknowledging the posssible impact of the researcher as a female on the level of intimacy created with the women (and perhaps not with the men), this does point to a possible difference in profile between men and women which was not captured by the survey data and which Dix, too, found from her study. The self selection procedure that she saw women going through before they embarked on the course meant that they tended to be in more senior positions than men and, given the conflicting demands that were made of their time in terms of family and other commitments, they were characterised by a strong fighting spirit. This can be seen, perhaps, in the level of enthusiasm with which women viewed the benefits of the MBA course.

9.3 Impact of the MBA (research question two)

What impact does the MBA have on male and female MBA graduates in the labour market

9.3.1 Benefits of the MBA

While the survey data attempted to chart the career progress of male and female MBA graduates, the interview data provided a rich source of material on the perceived benefits of the MBA on personal and working lives. From the survey, the most popular reason for doing the MBA for men and women was to improve job prospects followed by intellectual stimulation. The need for management training emerged as an important factor from the interviews together with a recognition that the MBA was becoming a necessity rather than simply an advantage. Women were generally more enthusiastic than men in interviews over the benefits and produced a rich and wide variety of examples of specific benefits gained from the course. Much of these benefits were of an intrinsic nature and concerned factors such as enhanced confidence and credibility.

This greater enthusiasm on the part of women and the tendency to emphasise such intrinsic factors may partly reflect the greater degree of openness exhibited by women interviewees and a greater willingness to admit vulnerabilities. Alternatively, it may indicate that the MBA impacts more on women's careers in this respect than on men's. This supports Melamed's view that, as women are judged by stricter criteria than men, top qualifications are necessary for them to succeed. In addition,

qualification levels serve to enhance women's credibility which would otherwise be reduced by their gender. The many women who referred to how the MBA had improved their credibility (Chapter Six, section 6.6.4) and their confidence (Chapter Six, section 6.6.6) in their professional dealings lends support to this view. One impact of the MBA on women's careers may well be indirect, therefore, via increased confidence, credibility or broader networks. As these are all areas where women are often disadvantaged, it is not surprising perhaps that women feel the benefits of the MBA more keenly than men even though some of those benefits may not be measurable and are not sufficiently captured by the survey data.

Measurable changes in men's and women's careers were assessed by examining changes in management function, management role and salary levels subsequent to the MBA. Although it is difficult to attribute changes before and after the MBA to the qualification alone, there was some impact in these respects on the careers of men and women. The nature of that impact, however, was found to vary to some extent by gender, by sector and by age. Overall the impact on men's careers appears to be greater than on women's and the impact on the private sector men was greater than on private sector women and on the public sector as a whole. Private sector men appear to benefit most in terms of changed management level, function and pay and public sector women appear to benefit more than private sector women in terms of moves into senior positions though this trend is not reflected in salary levels. Younger women experience the largest change into senior roles than any other group though, as with women in other groupings, this is not reflected in terms of pay.

Although women do not necessarily occupy a narrower range of functions, they do perform different functions from men. These functions, such as Administration and Education/Training, were largely of a support nature and could consequently disadvantage women by reducing their visibility and power (Sheridan et al, 1990). However, one important outcome of an MBA for women, particularly in the public sector, may be the impact it has on the movement out of these functions and into more strategic areas. In fact, taking General Management and Development/Strategic functions together, little difference emerged in the extent of change in terms of proportions occupying more mainstream management post MBA.

The above trends are consistent to some extent with findings on management role where (as with function) there was a higher proportion of women than men at senior management level before the MBA. The change into Senior Management was broadly the same for men and women. However, taking the top four levels together (Senior Manager, Non Executive Director, Director/Partner and Chair/Chief Executive) the change into these levels was lower for women than for men, conforming with the findings on gender differences in terms of General Management referred to above. Sectoral differences for women was low. Overall the MBA had the greatest impact on men in the private sector and the smallest impact on men in the public sector in terms of moves into senior management roles. The lower impact for women (taking all senior roles together) is consistent with data on levels of pay where salary differences between men and women increased after the MBA and where the gender gap widened at higher pay scales and at more senior levels. However, younger women register the largest change into senior management roles

subsequent to the MBA.

9.3.2 Seniority and Career Blocks

The fact that women are often more senior than men when they embark on their MBA may not be surprising in the light of Dix's (1992) study of MBA students discussed in section 9.2.4 above. This she felt was because women had less confidence in their abilities, so they did not consider an MBA to be appropriate for them until they were reasonably well advanced in their careers. Moreover, the category "senior manager" may incorporate different levels. It is possible that women may find themselves stuck at the lower end of the senior management scale. Data from this study suggests that even at senior levels, gender differences in terms of pay are wide. This may be due to discrimination, to sectoral difference in pay or a tendency for women to occupy the lower echelons of senior management with less commensurate pay. The fact that very few women from this study managed even after the MBA to move beyond senior management and break into Director, Chair or Partnership levels, supports the latter view. However, there was no evidence from the interview data to suggest that women were in any way in less responsible positions within senior management than men. If anything the reverse was the case. They were, however, more likely to have experienced a career block either in their present or their previous position.

Such blocks mean that women may have to fight harder to reach similar levels to men and interviews provided some powerful data firstly on the problems that women

faced in their working lives and secondly on the strategies adopted to overcome them. One such strategy was to move to a different organisation. While levels of promotion and perceived career prospects were broadly the same for men and women, women's career paths appeared to be more mobile - they were more likely to have changed to their present position from a different organisation and to have spent less time in that position than men and this was particularly the case for younger women who were more likely than women generally to have moved to a different organisation to progress.

This conforms to previous work on women's career development. Nicholson and West (1988) and Baude (1990) found that women often resort to changing organisations to overcome career barriers and the so called 'glass ceiling', and that men enjoy a better opportunity to progress through an internal labour market. Such dynamism on the part of women can bring advantages. Melamed (1996) and Davidson and Burke (1994) point to the advantages of a wider range of experience and skills from frequent career moves which could ultimately benefit women's career progress. The greater level of mobility on this respect by younger women may go some way to explain their success in terms of moves into senior management roles subsequent to the MBA. However, while acknowledging these potential advantages, further research in this area was not systematically pursued. While both survey and interview data suggest a greater tendency on the part of women to change organisations, the difference (taking survey data alone) was not statistically significant and was not seen, therefore, to merit further investigation.

The overall picture, then, in terms of the relative benefits of the MBA for men and women is by no means clear cut. While women interviewed were considerably more enthusiastic about the benefits of the MBA in terms of their own personal and career development, and while there is evidence to suggest that women may be enabled by the MBA to move out of support functions such as administration into General Management, differences between men and women in terms of career advancement depend to some extent on the categories included in the analysis. However, there is some evidence to suggest that although women start from a higher base in terms of seniority, the MBA has less impact on their careers in terms of moves into senior management functions and management roles (though younger women are an exception here) and a far lower impact in terms of pay so that gender differences are greater post MBA, at higher pay scales and at senior management levels.

9.3.3 Sectoral Differences

Melamed (1996) argues that organisational structures are likely to have a greater impact on women's careers than men's. Men's progress, unhampered by negative attitudes or stereotypes, is likely to be unaffected by the nature of the organisation in terms of, for example, its attitudes to women managers. On this basis, the public sector is seen as being more conducive to the advancement of women in that it is more likely to adopt 'women friendly' policies such as flexible working practices and have active equal opportunities policies. Women, therefore, might be expected to progress further in this sector than in the private sector where the nature of the organisation might be less conducive to their advancement. The MBA, on this basis,

could well have a greater impact on women in the public sector, and their experience of career barriers lower, than in the private sector.

From this survey, women in the private sector are more likely to identify Inflexible Working Practices as a career barriers than women in the public sector (Chapter Seven, section 7.2.1.1) which supports Melamed's view on the lack of women friendly policies in that sector. At the same time, public sector women do appear to have the advantage over private sector women in terms of management function both before and after the MBA. Public sector women experience a larger change out of administrative functions into General Management, there is a higher proportion in General Management and Strategic/Development functions before the MBA and the swing into these functions post MBA is greater. The picture is less clear cut in terms of management role. While there is little difference by sector in terms of proportions in senior management, a larger proportion of women in the private sector were at junior management level particularly before the MBA.

On the other hand, private sector women earn more pre and post MBA, they are more likely to be promoted and to spend less time in their present position, and they are also more likely to view their prospects as good. While much of this could reflect the more dynamic nature of the private as opposed to the public sector and the higher salaries commanded in that sector (rather than the impact of the MBA on career advancement) the inconsistent nature of the results means that there is little evidence to suggest that either sector confers an advantage on women subsequent to the MBA.

While public sector women have the advantage over private sector women in terms of seniority and moves into senior positions post MBA (in terms of management function), private sector women have the advantage in terms of pay, promotion and prospects. However, private sector men have the advantage over both private sector women and over public sector men and women in terms of senior roles before and after the MBA, in terms of promotions and in terms of pay. While it is difficult to judge whether private sector men are more ambitious than the other three groups, and while there was little sectoral or gender difference in the main reasons given for taking the MBA (improve job opportunities was the most popular choice here), there is some evidence to suggest that men rate salary and status more than women and that private sector men rate this more than public sector men. Private sector men are also more likely than the other three groups to have progressed within their existing organisations, suggesting the greater likelihood of the existence of an internal labour market of promotion opportunities. There is therefore a greater conformity between men and women in the public sector then between men and women in the private sector and it is private sector men who appear to progress further and to benefit most from the MBA.

This suggests that the MBA has an impact on men and women in terms of career progress but that the nature of that impact varies. In measurable terms, ie in terms of function, role and pay, the MBA does not appear to help women as much as men though this depends as far as role and function is concerned on the categories that are included within each measurement. Data on pay is less controversial though some difference in the figures undoubtedly reflects the higher proportion of women in the

public sector where salary levels are generally lower. However, the gender pay gap at this level may indicate that women are either being discriminated against in terms of pay or that they are being blocked in the lower levels of senior management and experience difficulty climbing further up the hierarchy. Little difference emerged in terms of promotions except insofar as women are more likely to have moved to a different organisation in order to progress. However, the MBA does seem to have helped women to move out of support functions such as administration (particularly in the public sector), personnel or education/training into more mainstream management functions and so may have helped to "unblock" a career that would otherwise have faltered

9.3.4 Summary

In non measurable terms, and relying on the interview data, the MBA would appear to have brought considerable benefits to women, especially in terms of more intrinsic factors such as confidence levels, enhanced credibility and, to some extent, interview skills. While these might not have enhanced career prospects in measurable terms it may well have contributed to women's sense of self worth and overall confidence. While the greater reticence on the part of men needs to be taken into account in the interpretation of interview data, women's expression of benefits received from their qualification was considerably more enthusiastic than men's and the nature of those benefits were discussed in more detail. However, as Melamed has suggested, qualifications may well have a greater impact on women's careers than men's. Men have less need of a qualification to enhance their credibility. Their careers are likely

to be facilitated by membership of informal networks and they are more likely to be working in a culture that rewards their (male) attributes. The MBA is therefore unlikely to confer further advantages in this respect. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to discuss the advantages of the MBA in terms of enhancement of credibility and confidence, as the interview data attests. Wendy's assertion (Chapter Six, section 6) that the MBA made her realise that the quality of discussions at meetings were not always that high or meaningful may epitomise the 'eye opening' nature of the MBA for many women and explain the more muted response on the part of men.

9.4 Impact of Career Barriers (research question three)

What are the nature of career barriers encountered by male and female MBA graduates and how do these barriers impact on careers experiences and behaviours

9.4.1 Career Barriers

Chapter Eight (section 8.3.1) refers to formal and informal barriers to women's career progress with formal barriers including such factors as lack of training or inflexible work patterns while informal barriers include attitudes and cultural practices that disadvantage women. Attitudinal barriers and the closing of ranks

against women have been identified by research as a serious impediment to women (Marshall, 1984; Cockburn, 1991; Coe, 1992, 1995; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Maddock & Parkin, 1994). Cockburn (1991) refers to male resistance to women managers and describes how men bond with each other to reinforce morale and solidarity often at the direct expense of women. Maddock and Parkin (1994) refer to a "Locker Room" culture which again excludes and marginalises women. Davidson and Cooper (1992) discuss the "old boys network" which has the function of providing an exclusive "haven" for men while Marshall (1995) refers to men "banding together" in reaction to women managers.

In accordance with this research , women MBAs from this survey gave preference to informal barriers so that Insufficient Education, Lack of Training Provision and Inflexible Working Patterns scored less highly than did the Men's Club, Prejudice of Colleagues and Sexual Discrimination. In each of the former three cases (formal barriers), negligible responses were recorded when respondents were asked to choose the single largest barrier - suggesting that these were not significant factors in women's careers. Women generally gave a higher preference to attitudinal or 'external' factors in their choice of career barrier over personal or individual factors, though lack of confidence was an exception in this case as was Lack of Childcare for women with children (discussed in section 9.1). Men, by contrast, gave preference to these more individual factors and there was less consensus among the men as to the barriers they had experienced.

In general, older women experienced more barriers than younger women and these

barriers were largely attitudinal or social in origin. The largest difference in terms of age occurred with Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence with higher proportions of younger women claiming this to be a barrier than older women. This may, however, simply reflect that heightenend confidence that age and experience generally brings.

9.4.2 The Men's Club

However it is described, this 'banding together' referred to by Marshall (1995) and described here as the 'Men's Club', is a factor that influences the working lives of the majority of MBA graduates. A remarkable degree of consistency emerged in terms of the proportions of women choosing the Men's Club as a key barrier. The figure was largely unaffected by marriage, by sector or by seniority. Two key exceptions to this consistency emerged.

Firstly, (as discussed in Chapter Seven, sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2) middle managers were more likely to claim this to be both a barrier experienced and the single largest barrier over senior or junior managers and older women were more likely (to a lesser extent) to claim this as a barrier than younger women. This may be due to women middle managers getting bocked at this level and experiencing difficulty difficulty breaking into senior management. Unlike the Men's Club, the proportions choosing Prejudice of Colleagues, however, was greater at senior than at middle or junior levels. As Cockburn (1991) points out, prejudice could be linked to seniority in that senior women are more likely to challenge the traditional role placed on them by

organisations. They may encounter heightened resistance, or prejudice, as a result.

Secondly, women with children were more likely to identify the Men's Club as a barrier than childless women. This may reflect the particular difficulties women with children experience in coping with the twin demands made upon them (and which still appear to be seen as the women's responsibility) and lead consequently to a greater awareness of the disadvantage of their gender than childless women and to a greater willingness to be critical of their employing organisation, its processes and practices. This is evidenced by the higher proportion of women with children not only identifying the Men's Club as a barrier but also Sexual Discrimination and Social Pressures, in addition to the more predictable barriers of Lack of Adequate Childcare and Family Commitments. This supports the view discussed earlier that women's family circumstances are, even at management level, important factors determining their worklife experiences and that responsibility for children still lies with women.

Women's choice of the single largest barrier, more exacting in that only one option could be selected, also exhibited a high level of consistency between categories, so that it too was largely unaffected by age, marital status, management level (with the exception of middle managers discussed above) or organisational sector. The Men's Club was the most popular choice and stood out in that it attracted a considerably higher proportion of women than the second most popular choice, Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence. In fact what had appeared to be a popular choice in terms of barriers experienced often became insignificant when only one option could be

chosen for the single largest barrier. For example, Sexual Discrimination attracted a 20.9% response as a barrier experienced but only one women out of the 91 chose this as the single largest barrier. Similarly, 13.2% found Social Pressures a barrier but only two women chose it as the largest single barrier, and 14.3% identified Lack of Adequate Childcare but only one women, again, chose this as the single largest barrier. This suggests that when asked to make the more exacting choice of single largest barrier, women feel that the Men's Club represents more fully their experiences.

9.4.3 The Formal and the Informal Context

While from the survey data, the majority of women had experienced the Men's Club at some stage in their working lives, more complex processes were uncovered by the interview data. All the women interviewed, with one exception, referred to the Men's Club or equivalent as something they had experienced either in their present or their previous positions. However, the nature of that experience varied so that no single characteristic was common to all. A common theme however, was the distinction drawn between the formal and the informal organisation, with the exclusiveness of the Men's Club being located, as one might expect, in the latter. The formal organisation, underpinned in most cases by some commitment to equal opportunities, afforded women a measure of protection so that in most cases and in most circumstances they felt on an equal footing with men. This may go some way to explain the low proportion of women who claimed Sexual Discrimination to be the single largest barrier (although it attracted a relatively high response as a barrier

experienced). Some aspects of Sexual Discrimination may be associated with processes and practices located within the formal organisation via, for example, discriminatory recruitment/promotion procedures. Although such discrimination was evident among the interview sample, it was practices within the informal context which affected women's daily lives and where they felt unsafe and vulnerable. This may explain the high proportion of women preferring the Men's Club as the largest single barriers and why other 'external' factors such as Sexual Discrimination were not so popular.

Several women did make reference to discrimination they had experienced within the the formal context (Amanda had been passed over for promotion on several occasions in her previous post; Tracy had not been offered board membership in her previous position though her replacement was offered this and a higher salary; Carol had been blocked in an administrative post and told that administration managers had no career path) though they also described how they felt relatively comfortable within the formal environment. In other words, most women appeared to feel a sense of 'organisational fit' within the formal context, though many women referred to the strategies they had to adopt to achieve this.

To explore women's sense of 'fit' within the formal context further women were asked about their experiences at meetings. Chapter Eight (section 8.3.4) provides some evidence of how women dealt with this formal context, where they were often the only women present. What emerged here, in contrast to the informal context, was

a sense of hard won acceptance , but acceptance nevertheless. Women were seen as experts in their field and their views respected accordingly. However, women had to be careful to avoid stereotypical images of themselves as "scatty" or "dumb" females by, for example, being well briefed and monitoring the number of questions asked. Presentation of self as efficient and well informed was necessary to gain the badge of approval from male colleagues. Women therefore could never relax such vigilance, but gained acceptance as a result albeit at a personal cost.

A possible connection exists here between women's sense of 'fit' within the formal context of the meeting and the MBA. Several women commented on the advantage that the MBA had given them in terms of credibility (Chapter Six, section 6.6.4), confidence (Chapter Six, section 6.6.6.) and an understanding of the "jargon" of management discourse (Chapter Six, section 6.6.2). All of these would be assets in gaining acceptance and in resisting powerful negative stereotypes of women in the context of the meeting. As Chapter Six (sections 6.6.1. to 6.6.6) illustrate, women identified advantages from the MBA such as an understanding of the "jargon" of other functional areas (Tracy); knowledge of the "critical issues" (Mandy); being able to argue with the "tough boys" at meetings (Maura); detecting lack of knowledge behind the jargon (Wendy); feeling confident to ask questions without appearing "dumb" (Maggie). These assets gave women confidence to challenge. As Maura asserts, being able to ask "why" from a basis of knowledge and understanding is part of arguing with the "tough boys", rather than a request for information or for clarification which might women vulnerable to the stereotype of "dumb" woman.

The MBA could be instrumental, therefore, in equipping women with the necessary confidence and power to be recognised and accepted within the formal context. In other words, it might help them to win the badge of approval from men. This badge of approval, however, did not necessarily extend to external meetings or to meetings where external personnel were present. In these contexts women had had no time or opportunity to 'prove' themselves, so that they were more likely to be subject to negative attitudes and stereotypes than in their own work setting. Bronach and Heather both described their different experiences in internal and external meetings in this respect and for Amanda the behaviour of her own colleagues altered and became more macho during offsite meetings where some relaxation of the 'rules of the game' seemed to be felt.

The relative sense of safety experienced by women within the formal context, with the possible exception of meetings with external personnel, was not found within the informal organisation. Chapter Eight (section 8.3) makes reference to the complex processes that were in existence within the informal context. While the 'Men's Club' from the survey data gave evidence to the extent to which women experienced informal processes of exclusion as a barrier as well as the extent to which this varied by, for example, sector, level and family circumstances, the nature of quantitative data meant the survey was not able to capture the complexity and variety of that experience. The interview data, however, provided a rich source of material.

9.4.4 The Men's Club and Organisational Fit

Nearly all the women interviewed referred to a 'Men's Club' as something they had experienced at some time in their career. The nature of that experience however varied according to the degree of organisational fit which itself related to the numerical distribution of women within the organisation. While women in the 'good' organisational fit category did not experience exclusion at work, women in the contradictory fit group experienced a more oblique form of resistance while in the poor organisational fit category women encountered overt hostility and antagonism.

Neither Barbara nor Carol, defined as having a 'good organisational fit' and who worked in organisations where women were well represented at all levels, experienced any exclusion or marginalisation at work. A high degree of integration and little tension, if any, existed between the formal and the informal organisation. While Barbara had experienced men's club behaviour at off site conferences (for example where men changed the subject away from sport as she approached the group) and where she felt her difference as a senior women manager in her field, Carol pointed out the need to network as something she had difficulty with and which she had to work hard to do. However, in their work situations they felt comfortable and included in all aspects of organisational life.

Women who had a 'partial organisational fit' worked in organisations that were male dominated at the top and at the same level as the women themselves but were more

integrated lower down the hierrachy. In other words, women did occupy positions of power even though this may not be at senior levels. Here women referred to aspects of isolation and resistance and located this within the context of the organisational culture and its expectations and norms. The form of resistance was oblique in the sense that it did not consist of open acts of hostility or discrimination. Maggie, for example, felt the need to separate herself from some of the male camaradie around her in order to protect herself from sexual innuendo. Sheppard (1989) sees this as nearly always the responsibility of women, who embody the emotional and sexualised aspects of organisations. Men, who symbolise gender neutral rationality, are not required to take on such responsibility and in fact are likely to be active in creating opportunities for sexualised discourse. Maggie's reaction to her situation is part of what Acker (1992) would see as a gender management strategy to manage femaleness through the control of sexuality in order to match organisational expectations and to blend in. However, these strategies are generally only necessary in organisations where women form the minority, and where, according to Gutek (1985), sexuality tends to be more prominent and more problematic for women. A "friendly" approach in a male dominated environment may well be "misconstrued" and lead to "difficulty" for the woman concerned (quotes from Maggie) unless that atmosphere is monitored to control the sexuality which the woman embodies.

While Maggie carefuly monitored her behaviour, Jackie coped in isolation and silence with long hours, a heavy workload and the demands of a young family - fearing that her commitment to the organisation and her credentials as a senior

woman manager might be questioned by male colleagues if she made allusion to her domestic circumstances. In this way she attempted to circumvent stereotypical views of women managers which might serve to undermine her further. Susan discussed the resistance she experienced to her authority amongst some junior male staff, as well as the male networking that went on in the pub and from which she was excluded. Maura also made reference to the "clubbiness" of male colleagues and to the demands for results and for high performance within a macho atmosphere and Wendy discussed the downside of a paternalistic culture in which few demands were made upon her. Only Kim, in the category of partial organisational fit, made no reference to disadvantage pertaining to culture or networking. Women in the partial fit category therefore experienced a sense of separateness and isolation rather than overt exclusion. One possible exception here was Susan who admitted to her sense of exclusion and who relied on her male boss to find out what was going on within the informal context.

Barriers in this case were hidden within a culture that reflected male values and where male values prevailed. For these women, the "ownership" (Cockburn, 1991) of the organisation and its culture was in male hands. This reflects assertions by Cassell and Walsh (1994) and Marshall (1984;1992) that organisational cultures are often male constructed and reflect male values and interests as well as Smircich's (1993) view that an analysis of culture is necessary to raise issues of context and meaning and to bring to the surface underlying assumptions and values. One such underlying value may be the single minded pursuit of work objectives irrespective of potential costs to family life, a pressure to which Jackie and Maura felt compelled

to conform. Maggie's concern to control potential sexuality in her relationships with colleagues led to a sense of loneliness and isolation at work and while Kim did not refer to her organisation's culture except in terms of the rewards system, she did not benefit from support or from informal networks at work. Women therefore felt apart from prevailing norms and values which they did not share. However, while these women felt 'different' and in many ways isolated, they did not generally encounter overt resistance or hostility and, on a personal level, appeared to like and get on well with their male colleagues.

Women who experienced a poor organisational fit were very much in the minority in their organisations. Apart from themselves, women did not occupy positions of power at any level and instead tended to occupy traditionally female roles. Here women encountered more overt exclusion and hostility from male colleagues and line managers. Bronach, Caroline, Ann and Amanda all referred to a club culture, to pub lunches and golf from which they were excluded and to acts of bullying or aggression. In Ann's case the culture was a bullying one similar to the Barrack Yard described by Maddock and Parkin (1994). Bronach highlighted heightenend competitiveness among men in an organisation which had undergone considerable restructuring and reduced promotion opportunities over the past five years and referred to the disadvantages of not being included in after work drinking sessions. Caroline endured jokes and innuendo which served to reinforce gender power relations and to accentuate her sense of difference and separateness. Jokes performed the role of loyalty test to the dominant male group as discussed by Kanter (1977), testing token women's loyalty to men and their acceptance of their own category's

(ie women's) inferior status. Women who refused to take the joke were part of the team and isolated as a result. Cockburn (1991) identifies such behaviour as ways in which men bond with each other, reinforcing their morale and solidarity often directly at the expense of women. The type of sexual innuendo/harrassment experienced by Maggie is also part of this process and was discussed by Maddock and Parkin (1994) part of the "Locker Room" culture in which men build relationships on the basis of common agreements and common assumptions. Men in this culture frequently talk about sport and make sexual references to confirm their heterosexuality and to exclude women. So while for women the ability to laugh at their own expense is an important criteria of acceptance which ultimately impacts on the nature of working relationships, such acceptance is only superficial.

For Amanda, Bronach and Caroline, a clear division existed between the formal and the informal context. This division was less clear in the case of Ann as the bullying atmosphere permeated the whole organisation. All four were excluded from male networking and bonding and all experienced different forms of hostility and aggression. With the exception of Ann, all women felt more protected within the formal than the informal context and it was within the informal context that the hostility and aggression largely occurred.

9.5 Impact of the MBA on Career Barriers (research question four)

To what extent does the MBA help women to overcome career barriers

This was explored mainly through quantitative data, though some qualitative evidence is of interest here and is incorporated into the discussion.

Firstly quantitative data provided an assessment by the respondents themselves of the extent to which the MBA had helped overcome career barriers. Little gender difference emerged here with approximately one tenth of men and women claiming that the MBA had helped them overcome career barriers "to a great extent" and one third feeling it had not helped. Some sectoral difference occurred with private sector women more optimistic in this respect than public sector women. This may reflect greater optimism generally on the part of private sector women (they were more optimistic than public sector women about their career prospects, for example) though little sectoral difference within the female sample emerged over the types of barriers experienced.

Secondly, comparisons were made between the outcomes of the IM sample of women managers on career barriers carried out by Coe (1992) with the current sample of MBAs. This allowed some inference to be drawn concerning the effect of the MBA on career barriers. For each sample, questions on career barriers were identical. However, as discussed in Chapter Seven (section 7.2.5) several points must be taken into consideration before any conclusion can be reached on the

potential role of the MBA in helping to overcome career barriers. One such consideration concerns the seniority of IM members over women managers generally, their tendency to work in the private sector and in less traditionally female areas of management all of which may affect their perception of career barriers. Another consideration is that there is no data from the IM sample on the number of women who may already have an MBA. Although from the proportion of women with MBAs in the population as a whole, this may well be small (no more 15-20%), there is no guarantee that, for the purposes of comparison, that the IM sample will not contain some MBA graduates. For both these reasons, conclusions based on comparisons of the two samples must be treated with caution.

As Chapter Seven (section 7.3) has discussed, one factor to emerge from the comparison was a greater tendency for women MBAs to identify career barriers than women IM managers. In every category, a greater proportion of women MBAs identified barriers than IM managers. One exception was Sexual Discrimination where the figures were broadly comparable. The largest difference occurred with Lack of Personal Motivation/ Confidence followed by the Men's Club. In addition, fewer IM managers thought they had experienced no barriers compared to MBAs.

Several explanations may account for these disparities in the data. Firstly, the MBA itself may engender a negative attitude among key decision makers within the organisation that heightens career barriers. However, while several women from the interview sample complained of hostility or prejudice from colleagues and line managers towards their MBA, this was not so prevalent as to explain the differences

in the data. Older, male line managers who do not possess high formal qualifications may well feel threatened by younger and more qualified women (NB Mandy and Maura in this respect), but there was little evidence to suggest that this was translated as a result into heightened resistance or to the intensification of barriers. Many more examples, by contrast, emerged from the interview sample of the extent to which the MBA had been instrumental in helping women to gain interviews or actual promotions.

A second explanation concerns differences in seniority between the two samples. As women IM managers tend to be more senior than women managers generally (Coe, 1992) and possibly more senior than the MBA sample, their success may make them less likely to identify career barriers. On this basis, one might expect a greater comparability to exist between women IM managers and senior managers from the MBA sample. However, such comparability did not emerge, as Chapter Seven (section 7.3.1) has discussed. Therefore the seniority of IM women managers may not be a strong contributory factor in explaining the differences between the two samples in terms of experience of career barriers.

A third explanation may lie in different levels of expectations between the two samples. Having successfully completed the course, the main motivation for which was to improve job opportunities (Chapter Five, section 5.5.7), it could well be that MBA graduates have heightenend expectations of the impact of the qualification on their careers. If women feel disappointed in this impact, then MBAs may be more inclined to identify career barriers, having been disappointed either in their career

progress or in their experiences within the organisation. Although little gender difference emerged from the quantitative data in terms of the extent to which men and women felt the MBA had helped their careers, the MBA seems to have had a more limited impact on women's careers than on men's . This together with the large proportion of women MBAs identifying the Men's Club as a barrier suggests that their qualification has done little to overcome the highly prevalent and more hidden barriers embedded within the organisational culture. As Chapter Seven (section 7.4) points out, women who identified the Men's Club were less likely than those who identified Lack of Education or Lack of Training to feel that their MBA had helped them to overcome career barriers, suggesting that the MBA is less able to overcome barriers located within the organisation, its attitudes and/or its practices.

Disappointment over the impact of the MBA in terms of the more extrinsic factors of pay and status as well as the continuing intractability of organisational barriers despite their qualification may therefore lead more women MBAs to identify career barriers than women managers generally. In addition, this effect may have been exacerbated by the time difference between the two surveys. The MBA survey took place in 1994 and this coincided with a period of widespread restructuring and uncertainty. This, again, could have led to a heightenend awareness and experience of career barriers by the MBA sample.

Some difficulty in integrating the survey and the interview data on the impact of the MBA emerged from this inquiry. While from the survey data, women MBAs have not in many ways progressed as far as men, perhaps disappointing many women in

their key motive for undertaking the course namely to improve job opportunities, the interview data paints a more encouraging picture in which women greet the effects of their qualification with some enthusiasm. To reconcile these two conflicting elements, it is useful to draw a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence career progress. Extrinsic factors relate to pay and status and these have traditionally been seen to be factors valued by men while intrinsic factors which relate to job satisfaction are seen as being valued more highly by women (Scase and Goffee, 1984; Chapman, 1989). The two sources of data may well fall along these lines so that information on extrinsic factors were elicited from the survey. In these areas (management function, role and pay) women have generally achieved less well than men subsequent to their MBA. Information on more intrinsic factors were elicited from the interviews and in these areas, particularly pertaining to heightened credibility and greater confidence in using and understanding management discourse, women have expressed great enthusiasm and inferred a large impact. This suggests that while the MBA may not have the desired impact in terms of pay and status, in terms of more intrinsic factors, the MBA has proved to be a valuable asset in women's careers.

9.6 Token and Non token Women: Career progress and Career Barriers (research question five)

What are the implications of tokenism for career progress and career barriers encountered by female MBAs

Research into women in management suggests that an important aspect of organisational structure is the numerical distribution of women (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Ely, 1994). Linked to the attitudes that many men have about women is this closing of ranks against women by men. This was discussed by Kanter (1977) and Marshall (1984) who both related the process of exclusion to women being numerically in the minority. Women managers are then seen as tokens and as such are more visible than the numerically dominant men in the group. This serves to accentuate the difference between the two groups.

Much of the work from this study on MBAs conforms with Kanter's findings on the importance of tokenism within skewed groups for defining women's experiences within the organisation. Token women appear to be in more junior roles and functions before the MBA than non tokens though in terms of management role the MBA is associated with a larger change to senior management positions. Tokens receive higher pay than non tokens though this may reflect their greater representation in the private sector where pay levels tend to be higher. This pay gap increases after the qualification. On balance the MBA may lead to a greater change for token women though this does not imply an advantage over non token women

in terms of management function or management role though it does widen the gap in terms of pay. There is no difference in terms of promotions though token women were likely to spend less time in their present position than non token. Tokens were more likely to feel that the MBA had helped them to a great extent but were more pessimistic in terms of their organisation's attitude to women.

The interview data supports the broad findings of the survey data in that it suggests that the numerical distribution of women is related to degrees of organisational fit. Women who came into the 'good organisational fit' category, and who fitted in well with the organisation's culture and norms, worked in organisations where there was a balance between men and women at all levels of the organisation. Although, as Chapter Eight (section 8.2.2) points out, it is difficult to generalise from only two women who came into this category, these two examples do support Ely's work on gender mix in which an integrated environment at senior levels (where both women were located) is likely to enhance their experience of the culture as hospitable and supporting. According to Ely, women are encouraged to redefine previously held negative values about women in a more positive light. They experience the organisation as less sexist and feel free to express their inviduality without the constraints of stereotypical views of female behaviour.

What Ely emphasisies however is that it is sex integration at senior levels which is the defining feature over sex integration further down the hierarchy. In other words, where the organisation is evenly balanced at junior and middle levels but unbalanced at senior levels women are still likely to experience the environment as inhospitable

and non supporting and to undervalue their contribution to the organisation's success. This was no wholly borne out by the data. For example, while Maggie worked in a female dominated industry at middle and junior levels (the travel industry) she was the only woman senior manager. However, although she was constrained in her freedom to express her individuality at work, she did not experience the organisation as inhospitable. Maggie formed part of a group that was defined as having a 'partial fit'.Here women experienced some contradictions in their experience. They may describe the organisation's cultures in fairly positive terms, even though their actual day to day experience did not fully correspond with that description. The majority worked in organisations where there was an even gender mix further down the hierarchy but where men predominated at senior levels to a greater or lesser extent. Women did not encounter the overt resistance, as in the 'poor fit' category but were made to feel out of place. This casts doubt on Ely's assertion that it is gender mix at senior levels that is the only defining feature of women's experience. An even gender mix further down the hierarchy may not significantly alter the culture of the organisation, but it may modify the more macho elements so that the culture appears more accommodating to women whatever their level.

By contrast, women who were in the 'poor organisational fit' category encountered overt hostility and resistance, worked in organisations where there was a predominance of men at every hierarchical level and where women in the organisations or sections/departments concerned tended to occupy traditional roles such as PA's and secretaries. In other words there were few women in positions of power and influence whatever the organisational level. Amanda was the only woman

manager in her whole company apart from the personnel manager and was in charge of an all male sales team. Bronach worked in an all male environment and, as a middle manager, was the only woman at her or at higher levels. Other personnel were mainly male technicians. Caroline, a senior manager, was in a similar position. Finally, Ann, as head of Food Technology in a boys' comprehensive, was one of only a few female staff and the only woman to be a head of department.

As Chapter Eight (section 8.4.3) points out, women in the poor fit category encountered various forms of exclusion and marginalisation which can be called 'Men's Club' behaviour. This refers to the tendency for men to form informal groups and networks which are not only dominated by male norms and values but which have as part of their agenda a resistance to women. As Cockburn (1991) has pointed out, men can be active in various ways in strategies of resistance whereby they claim "ownership" of the organisation (Cockburn, 1991). This can include sexual harassment or sexual innuendo, something which was experienced by both Amanda and Caroline, and which according to Cockburn, is a reminder to women of men's sexual power and a warning to women who step out of their "proper place". As Cockburn suggests, if women's proper place is seen by key men as being in the home or in junior positions at work then women's presence in organisations in positions of power and influence is in itself a highly political issue. Women who reach senior positions may therefore be particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment because their presence at that level calls forth new measures of exclusion and reassertion of male supremacy. Open appraisal of a woman in terms of sexual attractiveness can then be viewed as a "controlling gesture to diminish any sense of

power she may be acquiring and to remind her ' you're only a woman, that's the way I see you. And at that level you are as vulnerable to me and any man' (Cockburn p142). At the same time, women may unwilling to "make a fuss" on any issue in order to keep a low profile. According to Maddock and Parkin (1994) gender cultures code behaviour as male or female which then affects attitudes towards assertiveness: it is natural for men to be irascible and irritable whereas women have to conform to the gendered stereotype of being even tempered. Demanding attention or making complaints is therefore counter to the prevailing ideology of what constitutes female behaviour.

While Kanter suggests that sexual harrassment derives specifically from the power imbalance in the organisation, Cockburn points out that the relations in the workplace and the world beyond interact ie men's power in the family, the state and civil society enter the workplace and gives the most junior man a degree of sexual authority relative even to senior women. The 'taking' of women's bodies via suggestive or judgemental comments and by physical touching she refers to as the 'male sex right' which reflects women's status in society and which asserts her sex role over her work role - particularly if that role is a senior one. This view is supported by Cleveland (1994) who argues that women's minority status in organisations highlights a perceived difference between sex role and work role and that this incongruence is particularly evident if the woman occupies a senior position. At the same time, as Ely points out women who work in organisations that are male dominated at top levels experience higher levels of sexism and were more likely to perceive characteristics they had ascribed to women as a liability in their firms, a

view supported by Gutek (1985). In these settings private sphere relations between men and women, defined in sexual terms, are more likely to 'spill over' into relationshipos at work. Both Gutek and Kanter have suggested that women's sexuality becomes less salient as the number of professional women in organisations increases.

While Amanda's and to some extent Susan's experience fell very much within the above analysis, in Caroline's case sexual innuendo formed part of a joking banter which dominated the discourse amongst her colleagues. Kanter found similar behaviour patterns in her study at Indsco in which she found that jokes performed an important function of declaring solidarity with the dominant group and of excluding the minority. In this way jokes served to reinforce gender power relations and to maintain women as inferior (many of the jokes were sexist) and separate. At the same time, according to Kanter, jokes acted as a "loyalty test" for the dominant group of men, testing token women's loyalty to men and their acceptance of their own category's (ie women's) inferior status. Laughing at jokes made at other women's or their own expense would then signify "loyalty" and partial acceptance into the group as well as an acceptance of their own inferior status. Women who refused to take the joke were not seen as good team workers and were isolated as a result (Caroline's female colleague who refused to respond to or take part in such behaviour could be a casualty in this respect).

Overt resistance, therefore, may take the form of excessive joviality and banter which then can act as an important criteria for exclusion, delineating women as

outsiders if they fail to fully participate. Full acceptance, however, is not possible. As Cockburn suggests, men bond with each other through such behaviour and this reinforces their morale and solidarity often directly at the expense of women. This process is also referred to by Maddock and Parkin (1994) who discuss sexual innuendo as part of her analysis of the "Locker Room", a culture which excludes women and where men build relationships on the basis of common agreements and common assumptions. Men in this culture frequently talk about sport and make sexual references to confirm their heterosexuality and to exclude women. So while for women the ability to laugh at their own expense is an important criteria of acceptance which ultimately impacts on the nature of working relationships, such acceptance is only superficial.

Such behaviour by men can embody elements of competition (who can be most risky in their jokes, whose jokes are the funniest). In Bronach's experience, extreme competitive behaviour by men alienated her from the organisational culture and its practices and processes as well as excluding her from important information which was transmitted through membership of informal networks. This particular organisation had undergone severe restructuring over a long period of time which had created uncertainty, redundancies and had reduced promotion opportunities. This had in turn impacted on workloads and hours worked and had helped to create a culture of 'presenteeism' whereby people stayed late in the office even though the demands of the job did not always require it. Collinson and Collinson (1995) found such behaviour to be a male phenomena with long hours being used as a test of manhood and with some male managers enjoying the buzz of staying at the office

late into the evening. This had the effect of "recolonising" management as a male preserve as few women were willing or able to compete on these terms.

Therefore, gender mix appears to be an important feature determining how well women fit into the organisation. Gender mix at more junior levels may well influence organisational culture so that it becomes more accommodating to women, as evidenced by women in the partial fit category who, while in the minority at their levels, have a high proportion of women further down the hierarchy. It is gender mix at senior levels combined with the confinement of women in traditional female roles (and the absence of women in any other role) that appears to be the a factor behind women's lack of fit within the organisation.

9.7 Summary

This chapter has discussed the research findings of the qualitative and quantitative data within the context of existing work in women in management literature. It discussed the importance of family commitments to career progress and suggested that women, while tending to be younger and single compared to men, may be more forceful in terms of personality type. They tend to be in more senior positions prior to the MBA and the quantitative evidence alone suggests that women do not benefit as much as men from extrinsic factors such as pay and status. However, in terms of more intrinsic factors such as enhanced confidence and credibility, women are considerably more enthusiastic than men and claim a wider range of benefits. Nevertheless, women MBAs are still subject to career barriers despite their

qualification and these barriers are largely located within the organisational culture. Gender mix was discussed as a defining feature of the organisation's structure which appeared to have a large impact on women's perception of career barriers, their career progress and their experience within the organisation.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

This thesis has focused on women managers with an MBA qualification. It aims to assess the extent to which an MBA helps women in their careers and to ascertain whether significant barriers persist, despite the qualification, to women's career development. It takes as its frame of reference the sex difference approach within the liberal feminist perspective and the organisation-structure approach within radical feminism to assess their applicability as explanatory frameworks for understanding the experiences of this particular type of woman manager. These approaches inform the two research propositions and the five research objectives around which the thesis is organised. The two research propositions are:

Proposition 1

The MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men.

Examination of this proposition has tested the applicability of the sex difference approach within liberal feminism which suggests that the acquisition of further

qualifications such as an MBA would help women to compete on an equal footing with men. One would therefore expect the MBA to help women overcome the disadvantages that they have been shown to face in the labour market

Proposition 2

Despite the MBA, women managers face barriers to career progression that are located within the organisation, its structures and processes.

Examination of this proposition has tested the applicability of the organisation-structure approach within radical feminism which suggests that despite individual attributes such as qualification levels, women face hidden barriers within the organisation that impede career progress.

These two research propositions have led to the following objectives:

Objective 1

To examine the respective profiles of male and female MBA graduates in terms of personal characteristics (eg age, marital status, parenthood, education background) and career characteristics (eg management function, management role, pay, career path, organisational sector and organisational activity) in order to ascertain key differences between the two samples.

Objective 2

To examine the respective profiles of female MBAs and women managers generally in terms of personal and career characteristics (see above) in order to ascertain what, if any, key differences there are between the two.

Objective 3

To examine the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates before and after receiving their qualification in order to assess the differential impact of an MBA on men and women and to establish the extent to which an MBA helps women.

Objective 4

To explore the nature of career barriers experienced by women MBA graduates and the impact those barriers have on their career progress.

Objective 5

To ascertain the extent to which women MBA's token status affects the nature and intensity of barriers experienced and the extent to which it impacts on the career success

The conclusion is organised around a discussion of the two research propositions and a discussion of the implications that these have for the theoretical perspectives reviewed. This thesis argues that it is more productive to conduct an analysis of the career benefits of the MBA on an understanding of the implications of formal and the informal context rather than of the impact of individual versus structural factors.

10.2 Proposition One

This proposition underpins objectives 1 -3 which concern the respective profiles of male and female MBA graduates, of women managers and a comparison of the labour market position of male and female MBA graduates before and after the MBA. An analysis of this research proposition tests the applicability of the sex difference perspective within liberal feminism that argues that the acquisition of further attributes such as an MBA enhances individual career prospects and enables women to compete on an equal footing with men. On this basis one would expect the MBA, in overcoming previous disadvantages pertaining to lack of qualifications, inappropriate academic background or lack of key management skills, to enhance the career progress of women at least as much as the career progress of men. From within this perspective, Melamed's emphasis on the importance of job relevant attributes such as qualification levels for women's career progress takes this prediction one stage further to suggest that such attributes may have a larger impact on women than on men. This carries with it the implication that the MBA may help women more than men as the qualification compensates for some of the disadvantages attached to their gender.

As Chapter Nine (section 9.3.1) has pointed out, inconsistencies between the quantitative and qualitative data led to some initial difficulties reconciling the two sets of results. Survey data on the one hand has suggested that women do not progress as much as men subsequent to the MBA while interview data has painted a more optimistic picture of a wide range of benefits accruing from the qualification. Even within the survey data some contradictions emerged. This section discusses the nature of those contradictions and attempts to reconcile conflicting elements into a coherent assessment of the above proposition. The section deals firstly with the outcome of the quantitative data and evaluates the role of individual differences in explaining MBA's career progress. It then discusses inconsistencies within the quantitative data and finally considers how the two sets of data - quantitative and qualitative - can be integrated.

10.2.1 Conclusions from Quantitative Data

As we have seen, the sex difference perspective presupposes differences between men and women in terms of individual characteristics which are seen to disadvantage women in their career progress. An enhancement of these characteristics would then help to put women on an even footing with men. In terms of the quantitative data outlined in Chapter Five (section 5.3) and in Chapter Nine (section 9.3.1), the following broad conclusion can be drawn:

Women may be more senior to men prior to the MBA but their subsequent progress will not be so great.

An initial assessment of the impact of the MBA on careers was undertaken by examining management function, management role and pay before and after the MBA together with promotions and progression subsequent to graduation from the course. Women's more senior status prior to the MBA emerged largely from data on General Management and Strategic Development functions (generally associated with senior positions) and the Senior Management category in terms of management role. This conforms with the outcome of Dix's (1991) study on MBA students in which she suggests that women operate a more rigorous self selection procedure than men so that they tend to be further advanced in their careers before they embark on the course. At the same time, MBA graduates tend to be high fliers and it is possible that women have to be even more determined to succeed than men in order to overcome some of the odds against them. Results from the interview data in this project as well as evidence from Dix's study give evidence of the types of pressures women need to overcome to succeed on the course. These two factors (namely rigorous self selection and high levels of determination among women) may explain their small advantage over men in terms of seniority prior to the course. This advantage was not reflected, however, in terms of pay where men and women tended to occupy lower pay scales in equal proportions but where a gender gap (with men in the lead) emerged at higher pay scales.

In fact the three main measures of career progress (function, role and pay) did not always produce consistent results. Firstly, trends that emerged in terms of management function were not fully reflected in terms of management role particularly concerning seniority levels where one would expect to find some conformity (for example between General Management/Strategic functions and

Senior Roles). Lack of convergence in the data depended largely on the categories included in the analysis. For example, while the change into Senior Management was broadly the same for men and women after the MBA, when the top four senior roles were taken together men had the advantage so that the change into these top roles was greater for men than for women indicating that women may be able to break into some levels of senior management but no further. In terms of management function the outcome also depended very much on the categories included in the analysis. In this case, the change into General Management was greater for men than for women but when General Management and Strategic/Development functions were taken together the change into these central or senior functions was broadly comparable. This was due to the large number of women who had moved into the Strategic/Development function subsequent to the MBA.

Overall, the results from management role are likely to be more reliable than those from management function. Difficulties arose with the question on management function (Chapter Four, section 4.9.2.2): some respondents chose more than one category so that a judgement had to made concerning the single central function which may have reduced the quality of the data. Also, the number of categories was too great for statistical testing and no easy way of merging categories was available. It has been useful therefore to think of data from management function as supplementary to other more reliable data on role and pay.

Combining this data with pay supports the conclusion above that women do not benefit as much as men from the MBA. Men were more likely than women to move into the higher pay scales after the course. However, unlike management role and

management function where women had an initial advantage in terms of seniority, women started off with a pay disadvantage relative to men. Some of this disparity may well be related to the higher proportion of women who work in the public sector where pay levels are generally lower. What is significant however, is that the pay disadvantage increases after the MBA and at senior levels. While it is possible that the pay gap between the public and private sectors increases with seniority simply because the private sector can afford to reward its senior personnel more highly, and that the pay gap post MBA widens because more women and men are gaining senior positions in the public and private sectors respectively, the concentration of women in these sectors is not so great as to explain the whole of the disparity (58% of women work in the public and charitable sector and 42% in the private sector) though the concentration of men is greater (23.2% of men work in the public and charitable sector and 76.7% in the private sector). This supports the findings on management role discussed above, namely that women may be moving into senior management after the MBA but not into above senior management levels (eg as director or partner). It may also suggest that women are moving into the lower levels of senior management but that they are experiencing difficulties progressing into the upper reaches of this broad category.

10.2.2 Can differences in individual characteristics explain the differential position of male and female MBAs?

According to the gender- centred approach, key differences between men and women in terms of characteristics and attributes would help to explain women's disadvantaged position within the labour market. Therefore, the lower career progress

of women MBA's (discussed above) could be explained by differences in such attributes. Individual factors included in this study which made up the overall profile of male and female MBA's were age, educational background, attitudes to work, marital status/parenthood, and previous experience. Significant differences emerged firstly in terms of marriage and family with women less likely to be married and to have children but more likely to view caring responsibilities as damaging to their careers. Significant differences also emerged in terms of subject of first degree (though not qualification level) and organisational sector. Though not tested for significance, differences also emerged in terms of management function. No significant difference emerged in terms of age though women tended to be younger than their male counterparts.

Qualifications

One common supposition is that women's career disadvantage is located partly in their lack of qualifications (eg the sex difference approach and Human Capital theory) and that the MBA would then help overcome this disadvantage and facilitate career progress. However, results from this survey suggest no significant differences in this respect. Significant differences did emerge in terms of the subject of first degree with women preferring Arts/Humanities subjects and men having chosen a background in Science or Engineering. While Chapman (1989) has suggested that this choice of first degree can disadvantage women, men as well as women from the interview sample discussed the need to compensate for what they saw as an inappropriate academic background. In other words some men, as well as some women, embarked on the MBA because they felt their background to be a disadvantage in a

management career (a technical background was seen as too narrow, an Arts background was seen as insufficiently rigorous).

Therefore the disadvantage thought to be conferred by academic background may be not be any greater for women MBA's than for men. Chapman's study concentrated on first degree graduates and it is possible that his findings do not apply so much to post graduate level or to the MBA. A post graduate qualification may help to compensate for any disadvantage created by choice of first degree. This may be particularly the case with the MBA which, unlike other post graduate qualifications, is unrelated to the subject of the first degree. After two years in the labour market it may therefore be presumed that any career disadvantage that could have been attached to choice of first degree would have been considerably reduced by the earlier acquisition of a higher level management qualification. On this basis, although significant differences between men and women emerged from the data in terms of academic background, this thesis argues that these differences are unlikely to explain the differential career path that MBA graduates subsequently take.

Family circumstances

In terms of family circumstances, women were less likely to be married and to have children than their male counterparts and significant differences emerged between men and women concerning the extent to which they felt that caring responsibilities had damaged their careers with women considerably more pessimistic in this respect. Family commitments have often been singled out as an important explanation for women's lack of representation at senior management levels and for their slower

career progress (Gatticker & Larwood, 1990; Adler, 1993; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1993). One potential explanation for the different labour market position of male and female MBA graduates may therefore lie in the dual role that many women with children undertake.

However, little evidence from the survey supports women's view that caring responsibilities impose a career disadvantage. Married women were broadly comparable with single women in terms of proportions in senior, junior and middle management roles before and after the MBA and the same comparability occurred between women with and without children. However, as the interview data attests, the costs on women managers with children as they cope with the conflicting demands made upon them can be heavy in terms of time and energy. This may encourage a belief that they have been held back by their domestic circumstances and that without these responsibilities their careers could have advanced further. In reality women with children seem to work hard to combine the two spheres of their lives and in so doing they have perhaps helped to compensate for any disadvantage that has been associated with their dual status.

Therefore, while acknowledging the heavy demands that parenthood makes on women managers, this thesis argues that caring responsibilities are not sufficiently influential to explain the differential career progress of male and female MBA graduates.

Organisational sector

Significant differences emerged in terms of organisational sector. The tendency is for women to be located in the public sector and for men to be concentrated in the private sector. Such concentrations can be thought to impact on their career progress. Melamed (1996) for example argues that organisational sector is likely to impact more on women than on men so that women can be seen to progress further in the public sector where woman friendly policies facilitate career development. Men on the other hand would tend to progress irrespective of sector so one would expect to find little difference between men by sector in this respect.

However, evidence on women's career progress by sector produces conflicting results. While public sector women have the advantage over private sector women in terms of management function there is little difference in terms of management role. In terms of pay, however, private sector women do considerably better and this advantage increases post MBA. Nevertheless, while the higher concentration of women in the lower paid public sector may explain some of the gender difference in terms of pay of male and female MBA graduates as a whole, the concentration is not so great (just over a half) as to be able to explain the whole differential. While reliable conclusions are difficult to draw in relation to the difference between private sector and public sector women, considerable variations exist between public sector and private sector men. Private sector men have the advantage over public sector men in nearly all aspects of career progress as well as over all women irrespective of sector, challenging Melamed's hypothesis concerning the incidental role of sector for men. The faster career track pursued by private sector men post MBA, together with

the higher concentration of men in that sector (over three quarters), undoubtedly contributes to the differential progress experienced by male and female MBAs. Sector therefore may be a strong factor explaining such difference. However, while sector was included in the picture of the overall profile of male and female MBA graduates, this can be seen not so much as an individual characteristic but more as an institutional factor pertaining to the organisation. Therefore, while acknowledging in this section the importance of sector for an understanding of this profile, a fuller consideration of the implications of this factor will take place in a later section.

Of the two remaining factors where significant differences occurred between the male and female sample (ie academic background and family circumstances) this thesis argues that neither is sufficiently powerful to explain the differential career progress of MBA graduates subsequent to their qualification.

10.2.3 Variations within the Data: Age and Sector

Section 10.2.2 has examined the difference that exists between men and women in terms of career progress and some possible explanations for that difference. This section examines differences between sub groups within the broader male and female samples. The broad picture of career progress for male and female MBA graduates is by no means consistent across different groups of respondents and is modified by age, by sector, by attitudes and by the gender mix of the organisation (the latter will be discussed more fully in a later section as it relates to proposition 2). This section attempts to reconcile and explain some of these inconsistencies. While attempting to do this, it is useful to keep in mind Sutton and Staw's (1995) injunction to keep a

sense of balance in terms of detail. Although theory is crafted around data, it cannot include all data and, as Weick (1979) points out, in social science as in any other science there is often a trade off between generalisations, simplicity and accuracy.

Age Differences

While the fact that age differences between male and female MBAs were not statistically significant meant that it was not a strong factor in explaining the differential career progress of men and women, some variation occurred within each group. Evidence from this survey suggests that younger women benefit more from the MBA than older women and more than younger men in terms of movement into senior management roles. However, they do not progress as much as older men. This faster progress of younger women may be linked to the age gap that has been found to exist between male and female managers. In 1995 the IM estimated that women managers were approximately eight years younger than their male counterparts and in this survey women were found to be younger than men, though the difference was not statistically significant. If younger women progress faster than younger men, this would undoubtedly be reflected in a lower average age for men at any given management level.

While it is reasonable to suppose that greater career advancement would take place in the under 35 than in the over 35 age bracket, this does not explain the gender difference in other words why younger women should have the advantage over younger men. However, this advantage for younger women was not reflected in pay - they still lag behind younger men in this respect (though the pay gap between men

and women is smaller in the under 35 than in the over 35 age group). The fact that younger women tend to be concentrated in the private sector (where pay levels are generally higher) means that sectoral differences are unlikely to account for the lower pay they receive relative to men.

One explanation for the gender gap by age might be that younger women managers have an advantage over younger men and over older women in terms of skills and attributes necessary for career success. Women MBAs are by definition 'high fliers' and, from the qualitative data (Chapter Six, section 6.7), many women felt they had superior skills to men. This was borne out to some extent by the more robust performance and presentation of themselves that women interviewees gave compared to men. (discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.9.2). Women claimed they were more "tenacious", "did better, worked harder" and had to be "twice as good as the men to get on" . As Morrison et al (1987) point out, because women are judged by more strict criteria than men, only high performers with higher levels of skills, qualifications and abilities are expected to succeed. This view is supported by Melamed (1996) in her hypothesis concerning the importance of job relevant factors for women. If this advantage is combined with greater levels of commitment to equal opportunities at the organisational level, as enshrined for example in Opportunity 2000, this may go some way to explain the greater career success of younger women. Older women who are at a less critical stage in their careers and who may not have benefited from such programmes at an earlier, more crucial stage, may therefore be expected to have progressed more slowly and perhaps along a different route, and not to have gained as much value from the MBA. For younger women a greater awareness of discriminatory practices and commitment to equal opportunities is likely to coincide

with this critical, early career stage so that they are able to fully exploit their talents and capabilities.

Certainly younger women appear focused and demanding in terms of career benefits. They perceived fewer career barriers than older women (Chapter Seven, section 7.2) and at the same time, they were less likely to perceive the attitude of their organisation to women managers as negative. They were more likely than older women to see their prospects as good and to have embarked on their MBA to improve job opportunities. They were also more likely to view salary and status, working relationships and marriage/partner as important. This confirms the suggestion made above that younger women may not experience the same level of disadvantage as her older 'sisters' so that she can outstrip in terms of seniority her male counterparts. It also suggests that younger women may have higher expectations of success at work and at home and are more demanding of themselves and of their organisations in having those expectations met. However, further research needs to be conducted in this area (the lack of a wide age dispersion in the interview sample meant this could not be fully explored through interviews) to fully validate these conclusions.

Therefore, younger men may possess different attributes from women and may be less able to compete with their high performance. In addition, faced with a growing commitment to equal opportunities within the organisation, they can perhaps rely less on their gender as a career enhancer than older men who could count on sexist attitudes preferring them an advantage. This could explain the higher performance of younger women in relation to older women, to younger men and younger women's

continued disadvantage in relation to older men.

Sector

Significant differences emerged between male and female MBAs in terms of organisational sector and this aspect has already been briefly considered as a contributory factor behind differences in career success. Within each gender group, variations in terms of career success occurred so that an overall conclusion concerning the lack of career progress of women MBAs and the enhanced career progress of men needs to include the differential impact of sectors.

As section 10.2.2 pointed out above, reliable conclusions concerning the importance of sectors on women are difficult to draw. Public sector women progress further post MBA in terms of management function but little difference emerged in terms of management role while in terms of pay, promotions and prospects private sector women appear to have the advantage. This lack of consistency was not shared however by men where in nearly all measurements it is private sector men who have the advantage over public sector men. Though slightly more public sector men were to be found in General Management and Strategic/Development functions before the MBA, in terms of the more reliable measurement of management role private sector men have the advantage before and after the MBA. In both cases (management function and management role) the change into senior positions is greater for private sector than public sector men. This advantage is reflected in pay. While private sector and public sector men were broadly comparable in terms of pay before the MBA, the pay gap widened after the qualification so that private sector men earned considerably

more. In addition, public sector men were promoted less frequently, they were less mobile and were more pessimistic about their prospects. Private sector men were more likely to be promoted from within their existing organisation suggesting a greater likelihood of an internal labour market which can enhance promotion prospects . In short, private sector men had the advantage over public sector men and over women irrespective of sector in terms of management level, promotions and pay subsequent to the MBA. This meant that there was a greater level of conformity between women and men in the public sector than between women and men in the private sector. In other words, the advantages that private sector men acquire from their sector and possibly from their qualification are not shared by women in that sector.

This contradicts Melamed's hypothesis that sector would tend to have a greater impact on women than on men, that women would tend to progress more easily in the public sector because of their more woman friendly policies and attitudes and that men would tend to progress irrespective of organisational sector. From this survey, sector appears to have a greater impact on men than on women so that there is a greater gap in career progress between private and public sector men than there is between private sector and public sector women. At the same time there is little evidence to suggest that women benefit from the supposedly more conducive public sector and progress further as a result of the MBA. Instead the evidence suggests that women in the private sector are disadvantaged not in relation to public sector women but in relation to private sector men. The possible reasons for this situation are considered in the next section.

10.2.4 Why does the MBA not confer the same advantages on private sector women as on private sector men

The profile of private sector men and women conformed largely with the overall profile for male and female MBAs. Therefore differences in individual characteristics were thought to be unlikely to explain their subsequent career progress. However, from the survey two key areas emerged as possible explanatory factors: attitudes to women managers in the organisation and personal attitudes to careers.

While this aspect of the organisation was explored more fully in the course of interviews and therefore forms part of the conclusions relating to Proposition 2, significant differences emerged from the survey in terms of the attitude of the employing organisation to women managers. Women were more likely than men to see these attitudes as negative and the private sector was more likely to be seen by both men and women as having negative attitudes than the public sector. In fact there was a high degree of conformity between men and women in the private sector in this respect. In other words men as well as women believed the organisation to be negative (this conformity was not shared by men and women in the public sector where public sector men were much more likely to see the organisation as having positive attitudes to women managers). Given that men are less likely to be aware of culture or negative attitudes because they are less likely to be disabled by them (Marshall, 1992), the assertion of men on this issue helps to confirm more fully the negativity associated with the private sector where equal opportunities programmes, if in existence, may operate in a less receptive environment. The less woman friendly atmosphere in the private sector was confirmed by the higher proportion of private

sector women choosing Inflexible Working Practices as a career barrier over public sector women. Although women in the private sector are equally likely as women in the public sector to have children, it is possible that women with children in that sector may experience more difficulty in terms of coping with the demands of work and home.

Therefore, the fact that private sector organisations are likely to have negative attitudes to women managers together with less woman friendly policies in that sector may well explain why the MBA has not had the same impact on women as on men in that sector. A second factor to emerge from the survey was differences in attitudes to careers whereby a more successful career in terms of enhanced pay and status subsequent to the MBA was associated with an attitude which valued those more extrinsic assets highly. By contrast, where pay and status had not been greatly enhanced by the MBA, the attitude tended to value intrinsic factors such as working relationships. In this way, private sector men valued pay and status more than private sector women and more than both men and women in the public sector. The latter two prioritised working relationships.

The greater tendency for private sector men to rate salary and status as important factors may suggest a more instrumental approach to work . By contrast, the tendency for public sector men and women to prioritise working relationships over the private sector men in particular may suggest a less instrumental approach to the extrinsic factors of pay and status in the public sector than in the private sector. This may be the case because managers are attracted to the sector where predispositions in terms of attitudes towards pay and status on the one hand and working

relationships on the other are more likely to be realised. Therefore, men who value pay and status may be attracted to the private sector because of the higher pay and faster career progress that is associated with that sector. Public sector men, on the other hand, who give more importance to family than private sector men, may therefore be attracted to the public sector in the belief that it will be more compatible with the demands of family life.

An alternative explanation might see attitudes to career being determined by the sector. Therefore, the public sector, imbued with a less capitalist ethos and where salaries tend to be lower and the career path less dynamic, would encourage an attitude that salary and status were less important than intrinsic factors of job satisfaction or working relationships. The latter would then be seen as compensation for a lack in the former. In this way, the lower priority given to extrinsic factors by public sector men and the higher priority given to children and family would act as a justification for their relative lack of success in the more extrinsic career elements compared to men in the private sector.

Whatever the reason for this relationship between attitudes and sector, the higher priority given to pay and status by private sector men together with the possibility of less woman friendly attitudes within that sector, may go some way to explain the differential impact of the MBA by sector and in particular why the private sector does not confer the same advantages on women as on men.

10.2. 5 Summary and Conclusions: Quantitative Data

Differences in individual characteristics and attributes are not sufficiently great or sufficiently influential to explain the differential career progress of male and female MBA graduates.

Women do not benefit as much as men from the MBA in terms of management function, role and pay. This section has considered the extent to which differences in the profile and characteristics of male and female MBA graduates can provide an explanation for their differential career progress. Areas of significant difference were examined. This thesis argues that individual differences do not provide a sufficiently powerful explanation for these differences though they may well be part of underlying contributory factors. However, organisational sector is associated with differential career progress, particularly for men. The high concentration of men in that sector together with the fast track that private sector men tend to pursue, may well act to create a gap between male and female MBA graduates and go some way to explain differences in career development.

While differences in individual factors have been found to be insufficiently strong to explain variations between male and female MBA graduates in terms of career progress, variations within each sample have been associated with age and sector. Younger women's rapid career progress has been explained by the combination of

high levels of skills and attributes with a more widespread acceptance of equal opportunities at the organisational level at a critical, early stage in their careers. The more rapid career progress of private sector men and slower progress of women in that sector has been explained by negative attitudes to women managers prevalent in that sector combined with differential attitudes towards careers with private sector men giving higher priority to salary and status than private sector women. The concentration of men in the private sector where career progress in terms of seniority and pay subsequent to the MBA is greater than private sector women and public sector men and women, may well explain some of the differential progress of male and female MBA graduates referred to above. However, while the type of employing organisation was included in the overall profile of male and female MBAs, as Melamed argues, organisational sector is part of the nature and structure of the organisation at the intermediate-organisational level. Therefore while it was necessary to incorporate sector in the overall analysis of the career progress of male and female MBA graduates, this is also a structural feature which will be considered further, together with other features such as gender mix, in section 10.3.2-3.

10.2.6 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Career Benefits: Reconciling Quantitative and Qualitative Results

The relative disadvantage that women experienced in terms of salary and status subsequent to the MBA was not borne out by the qualitative data and some inconsistency therefore occurred between the two sets of results. While women appear to have not benefited as much as men from the MBA in key aspects such as seniority and pay, from the interviews women referred with enthusiasm to the

advantages they had gained. While the benefits drawn from the survey were largely measurable (pay, role, function, promotions) benefits discussed through the interviews were non measurable and related to factors such as enhanced confidence, skills and credibility. The ability to challenge accepted ideas, to understand and use the discourse of management and to ask informed questions were examples of ways in which the MBA had imbued women with greater confidence and sense of self worth. While taking into account the greater degree of reticence and the lower level of intimacy achieved with the men, there was less evidence of enthusiasm and of the diversity and richness of benefits that had accrued as a result of acquiring the MBA.

Therefore, while from the survey data the MBA had not helped women as much as men, from the interview data the reverse appeared to be the case. In order to reconcile the two, a distinction was drawn between extrinsic and intrinsic career benefits. These factors have been discussed in section 10.4.2 above and have been seen by Nicholson and West (1988), Scase and Goffee (1989) and Marshall (1992) as factors which are of differential importance for men and women. Extrinsic factors refer to 'external' career benefits such as salary and status which tend to be prioritised by men. Women, perhaps because they know they are likely to be disappointed in these factors (Marshall, 1984), prioritise other job benefits such as working relationships and job satisfaction.

Quantitative data, which has suggested that women do not benefit as much as men from the MBA, has largely measured changes in these extrinsic factors that relate to salary and status (management role, management function, pay and promotions). The results therefore suggest that women have not benefited as much as men in those

factors on which they tend to place less importance. Qualitative data on the other hand has captured evidence which is directly related to intrinsic job factors. Enhanced credibility and confidence are likely to impact on job satisfaction and working relationships if (as seems to be the case from interview data) that confidence implies a more proactive approach to work problems and an ability to engage more fully in work related discussions. If, as the qualitative evidence suggests, women feel more confident to engage in these discourses and arenas of discussion and to feel less intimidated or marginalised by them, this would then impact favourably on their experiences at work.

As Melamed suggests, factors relating to lack of credibility are of more importance to women than to men. Men have the advantage of their gender which raises their credibility while for women the opposite is the case. Therefore, qualifications impact more on women than on men because they serve to enhance the credibility that has been reduced by their gender. On this basis, it may not be surprising that men, who do not experience the same level of disadvantage as women in this respect, should be less effusive on issues relating to the more intrinsic benefits of the MBA. Their heightened advantage in this factors means that they are firstly in less need of the MBA to further that advantage and secondly that they are less "tuned in" to those intrinsic factors which they see as unproblematic. Women on the other hand are likely to benefit directly in terms of those intrinsic factors in which they have been previously disadvantaged, and to be more aware of how an enhancement of those factors has impacted on their everyday work experience.

This means that the research proposition relating to the extent to which the MBA

helps women can lead to different conclusions and that this depends largely on the type of benefit in question. In terms of intrinsic factors, on which women place a greater priority, the MBA has enhanced their effectiveness, their confidence and their credibility. This is likely to impact favourably on job satisfaction and working relationships. The MBA therefore appears to help women more than men in these respects for the reasons outlined above. However, the MBA has been shown to be less successful in terms of the more extrinsic career benefits such as salary and status. These are factors on which women tend to place less importance and which appear to be more highly valued by men. As we have seen, women tend to start from a more senior level but achieve less seniority and less pay as a result of their MBA than men. Overall, concentrating on these extrinsic factors alone, the MBA does not help women as much as men.

This thesis therefore argues that:

The MBA helps women more than men in terms of intrinsic but not in terms of extrinsic career factors

10.2.7 Summary and Conclusions: Proposition One

Proposition 1 : The MBA helps the career progress of women less than the career progress of men.

The sex difference approach with liberal feminism has argued that key differences exist between men and women and that in order to progress in their careers women

need to enhance individual attributes such as qualification levels. From within this perspective, Still (1992) has pointed to the need for women to be more assertive and to gain the right qualifications and skills in order to compete on an equal footing with men. One would therefore expect that the MBA would enable women to achieve a more level playing field and to help them in their careers at least as much as men. Melamed (1996) goes one step further to argue that job relevant factors such as qualifications may impact more on women (who need the qualification to enhance credibility) leading to greater career benefits for women than for men. As Burke and McKeen (1994) have pointed out, many women, in tacit acceptance of the liberal feminist approach, embark on higher qualifications in order to overcome some of the odds that they see stacked against them. In pragmatic terms, the approach has therefore been influential both on the supply side namely for women's strategies for enhancing career progress and on the demand side in the form of various equality initiatives that have aimed to create an equal working environment for men and women.

In terms of individual differences, this thesis argues that although the profile of male and female MBA graduates has been found to vary, these individual factors are insufficiently strong to explain the subsequent and varying progress of men and women. So while the sex difference approach may have some credence in that some key differences between male and female MBA graduates were found to exist, when statistically significant differences were examined there was not a strong association between these individual factors (family circumstances and academic background) and the differential career progress of men and women. This casts doubt on the assumption of the sex difference approach that differences in individual characteristics

disadvantage women in relation to men. However, individual factors such as age and institutional factors such as sector were associated with variations in career progress within each gender group. In terms of sector, this thesis argues that the narrow and inconsistent gap between public and private sector women challenges Melamed's hypothesis concerning the importance of sector for women. At the same time the wide gap between private sector and public sector men challenges her hypothesis concerning the reduced impact of sector on men.

A related aspect of liberal feminism and the sex difference approach is the power of personal attributes such as qualification levels to enhance the development of careers. The MBA would then be expected to help women at least as much as, and possible more than, men. This thesis argues that in terms of intrinsic factors of credibility and confidence, the sex difference- approach within liberal feminism and Melamed's hypothesis concerning the greater relative impact of qualifications on women is supported by the enhanced intrinsic benefits the MBA brings. However, the above theories are not supported by the reduced benefit women MBA graduates receive in relation to men in terms of extrinsic factors of pay and status. This casts doubt on the liberal feminist prescription to gain more qualifications as a means of achieving career success and on Melamed's assertion of the greater career benefits from such qualifications on women than on men.

Therefore the proposition that the MBA helps the career progress of women less than men depends on the type of benefit reviewed. With intrinsic benefits, the proposition does not stand: the MBA helps women more than men. With extrinsic benefits the proposition is supported: the MBA does not help women as much as men. This means

that in order to assess the applicability of the sex difference approach within liberal feminism and Melamed's gender specific model of career success, a distinction needs to made between the different aspects of career success.

Critics of the sex difference approach and of liberal feminism generally (eg Walby, 1986, 1990; Cockburn, 1991; Witz, 1992, 1993; Ibarra, 1993) have argued that the neglect of structural factors limits the power of the theory to explain women's career progression. While the enhanced credibility and confidence subsequent to the MBA may be linked to women's initial disadvantage in these intrinsic factors, reasons for women's lack of success in terms of pay and status can be explored via the second research proposition which locates women's disadvantage in barriers at the level of the organisation, its culture and practices. By concentrating on these hidden barriers, this proposition takes on board the criticisms of liberal feminism and allows the applicability of the organisation- structure approach to women MBAs and their career progress to be tested.

10.3 Proposition Two

Despite the MBA women managers face barriers to career progression

This proposition is grounded in the organisation-structure perspective which argues that women's career progress is subject to hidden barriers located within the organisation, its structure and its culture. The proposition relates to objectives four and five.

Objective 4

To explore the nature of career barriers experienced by women MBA graduates and the impact those barriers have on their career progress.

Objective 5

To ascertain the extent to which tokenism affects the nature and intensity of barriers experienced and the extent to which it impacts on the career success of female MBA graduates.

The conclusions that relate to this research proposition are structured around the above research objectives. Some material will be drawn from the previous section. Firstly, conclusions will be drawn concerning barriers experienced. Secondly the dynamics of numbers will be used as an example of organisational structure to assess the role this has played in the differential position of male and female MBAs.

10.3.1 Barriers Experienced

If women do not progress as far as men subsequent to the MBA and if differences in individual characteristics are unlikely to be the cause, then the reason may lie in career barriers. Barriers can be overt or hidden. Overt barriers relate to inflexible working patterns, lack of career guidance or lack of qualifications and skill whereas hidden barriers are located within the organisation, its culture and practices. An understanding of the role of career barriers in women MBAs career progress, and the

extent to which the organisation-structure approach is applicable to women MBAs, requires an understanding first of all of the nature of those barriers.

As Chapter Nine (section 9.4.1) has discussed, women MBAs have tended to identify attitudinal rather than individual factors (with the exception of lack of confidence) as career barriers whereas for men the opposite is the case. Although the profile in terms of individual characteristics of men and women MBAs were found to differ, these differences alone were insufficiently strong to provide a compelling explanation for the subsequent difference in their career progress. This was reflected in women's choice of career barriers where more popular choices related to attitudinal or structural factors and less popular choices concerned a deficiency in individual factors. Accordingly, women gave preference to the Men's Club, Sexual Discrimination and Prejudice of Colleagues. These were chosen over Lack of Career Guidance, Lack of Training, Insufficient Education or Family and Childcare Commitments. This suggests firstly that women do not locate their disadvantage in individual factors such as lack of training or education and secondly that it is hidden or informal barriers that are important to women rather than the formal or more overt barriers.

This supports the organisation- structure perspective concerning the importance of hidden barriers and conforms with work by Marshall (1984), Maddock and Parkin (1994) and Cockburn (1991) on the role of cultural factors in disadvantaging women. Of the range of informal barriers available for choice, the Men's Club emerged as the single most important barrier as well as the most popular barrier for women with a high degree of consistency of response in both cases. This is significant not simply

because of the high proportion of women choosing this option, but because, in terms of the single largest barrier when only one option could be chosen, it was given preference over other attitudinal barriers such as Sexual Discrimination or Prejudice of Colleagues. This suggests that when asked to make the more exacting choice of single largest barrier, women were not only giving preference to the Men's Club which encapsulates the exclusiveness of a male organisational culture, but also that this was in preference to Sexual Discrimination or Prejudice of Colleagues. The latter two may not describe so powerfully those cultural practices and processes that discriminate against women, and which Cockburn has referred to as part of "corporate patriarchy", even though the end result in terms of curtailed opportunities and structural disadvantage could be the same. This implies that women's experiences coincide with cultural or hidden barriers within the organisation and that feelings of exclusion, marginalisation and disadvantage are defining characteristics of many women's working lives

This leads to the following proposition:

Women MBAs experience barriers related to attitudes and culture rather than to a disadvantage in individual attributes or characteristics

10.3.2 The Formal and Informal Context

This conforms with work that has been done on the importance of the informal organisation as the arena where barriers are likely to be hidden (Kanter, 1977;

Marshall, 1984). This can be seen in the high proportion of women choosing the Men's Club as a career barrier which is largely associated with the informal organisation. This was supported by the interview data which suggested that it was in the informal context where women felt vulnerable. The formal organisation, possibly underpinned by a commitment to equal opportunities, afforded women some protection against sexist or discriminatory behaviour. This may explain the extremely low proportion of women who chose Sexual Discrimination as the single largest barrier experienced. Sexual Discrimination may be seen by women as part of the formal structure and be associated with formal discriminatory practices that relate to promotion or recruitment decisions. While some women interviewed experienced such discrimination, it was the informal organisation, where the hidden barriers associated with a male dominated culture are located, that was particularly problematic for women.

What may be surprising here is not so much the concentration of disadvantage within the informal context but the sense of 'fit' that women experience within the formal environment. In other words while previous research has suggested the importance of hidden barriers and the disadvantage that women experience within the informal organisation, less attention has been paid to women's greater sense of 'organisational fit' within the formal context where women by and large feel on an equal footing with men. What is possible here is that the MBA has helped women to be seen as 'equals' within the formal organisation so that they are accepted in their own right. This is evidenced by the emphasis given to the enhancement of confidence and credibility discussed earlier as well as the prominence given to the advantage of the qualification in helping to manage and participate in the formal context of the meeting. Moreover,

the possession of an MBA may enhance the status of women as managers in the eyes of male counterparts and line managers. For these reasons (raised credibility, confidence and status) the MBA may help women within the formal context so that they receive the 'stamp of approval' from men. This may explain women's greater sense of 'fit' within the formal environment.

The concept of organisational fit (Cassel and Walsh, 1994) was used to analyse further the relationship between the formal and the informal environment and also to explore the impact of the numerical distribution of women on levels of comfort or discomfort experienced. The degree of synchrony occurring between the formal and the informal context was found to be associated with levels of 'organisational fit'. For women in the 'poor fit' category who experienced overt hostility and/or discrimination at work , there appeared to be a wide gulf between the formal and the informal environment. While women were largely accepted within the formal context, the informal context was characterised by different degrees of hostility or resistance. Women in the 'good fit' category on the other hand experienced a high degree of synchrony between the formal and the informal context so that the boundary between the two was blurred. Here the formal and the informal overlapped and merged. Women in the 'partial fit' category were someway between the two. They did not experience the same level of marginalisation and isolation from the informal context nor the levels of hostility but they felt a sense of difference and felt the need to approach the informal environment with caution. The significance of the different levels of organisational fit is discussed more fully in the next section.

This means that an analysis of women's position within the organisation may have to

make the distinction between the formal and the informal context. While some writers have acknowledged the importance of the informal in creating career barriers, the formal context may have been overlooked or subsumed into the wider organisational context. Consequently, the concepts of "resistance" (Cockburn, 1991) of the "locker room" and "male havens" (Maddock & Parkin, 1994) or the "old boys network" may be less appropriate for the formal context where women operate on a more equal footing with men.

Therefore, women do not generally identify career barriers relating to some lack in terms of individual characteristics and this conforms to earlier conclusions concerning the inability of individual differences to fully explain the differential career progress of men and women. In other words, the types of barriers which are likely to 'respond' to the MBA qualification in the sense that the MBA may have the power to reduce such barriers, were not the ones which women generally felt as being problematic in their careers (the one exception was lack of confidence which, as section 10.2.6 discusses above, was a barrier identified by a large proportion of women and which the MBA may well have helped to overcome) .The nature of career barriers experienced were therefore largely unrelated to qualification levels so that even with an MBA women could still be subject to career barriers. These barriers tend to be 'hidden' within the organisation and are likely to operate within the informal context. In fact, from this study, more women MBAs experienced career barriers than women managers generally. While it is unlikely that the MBA itself would exacerbate barriers experienced, it does point to the weakness of the qualification in overcoming barriers to women managers' careers.

However, on a more optimistic note, the MBA may have helped to enhance confidence and credibility and to have been instrumental in creating a more conducive atmosphere for women within the formal context. While as we have seen this is not reflected in terms of pay and status post MBA, the enhanced confidence, credibility and status that the MBA confers may reduce the 'resistance' (Cockburn, 1991) that women may otherwise experience in this setting and help to create a better working atmosphere. However, the greater proportion of women with MBAs identifying career barriers over women managers generally does not conform with this interpretation where one would expect the reverse to be the case. One explanation may concern the tendency to locate barriers within the informal context where the MBA would be less effective. On this basis it may not be surprising that women MBAs identify at least as many barriers as women managers generally. In addition, if as Burke and McKeen (1994) suggest women undertake an MBA to overcome some of the odds against them, women with MBAs may have higher expectations of career progress. Disappointed in their lack of success in terms of pay and status they may be more sensitive to the role of career barriers and identify more barriers as a result. For both these reasons it is possible to reconcile the greater possible effect of the MBA on the formal context with the greater tendency for women MBAs to identify career barriers over women managers generally.

This section has argued that the distinction between the formal and the informal context is an important one. While such a distinction has been made by previous research and where barriers have been found, as in this study, to be located in the latter, this thesis argues that the MBA may have helped women to gain acceptance and status within the formal context. This acceptance is not, however, translated into

higher levels of seniority and pay subsequent to the MBA. This implies that hidden barriers within the organisation 'leak' into the formal context so that despite their acceptance in this environment, women still suffer a disadvantage in relation to men. In other words women experience what could be termed an 'informal externality effect'. The following section discusses how such effects can be created.

From the above discussion the following proposition can be made:

The MBA helps women to gain acceptance within the formal setting but disadvantages can continue within the informal context which may impact on career progress.

10.3.3 Gender Mix

An important aspect of the organisation-structure approach is an analysis of the dynamics of numbers. The numerical distribution of women is generally thought to be an important aspect of the organisation's structure and it has been found to be an important factor behind women's career progress and the types of barriers experienced (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Ely, 1994). Kanter's early work, later taken up by Marshall and Ely, locate the processes that marginalise and exclude women in their numerical distribution and in the culture of the dominant group. Ely introduces the significance of management level and argues that even in organisations that are well integrated at junior levels, the culture can be inhospitable to women if it is male dominated at the top.

This research project therefore chose to analyse the effects of numbers on the career progress of male and female MBA graduates in order to assess the applicability of the organisation-structure approach to the analysis of the career progress of women MBAs. To this end the sample of women were divided into 'tokens' and 'non tokens', and at the same time the significance of the numerical distribution of women was explored in the course of interviews. Results of these investigations were discussed in Chapter Nine (section 9.6).

What has emerged from these investigations is the importance of the numerical distribution of women for defining women's experiences within the organisation, for barriers encountered and for overall career progress. Comparing token and non token women suggests that tokens are in more junior positions than non tokens but that they receive higher pay. The higher pay tokens command do not seem to be linked to higher status but could reflect their greater representation in the private sector where pay levels are higher and where the gap between public and private sector pay tends to widen with seniority.

In terms of women's experiences within the organisation and their perception of career barriers, numerical status had a profound impact. Token women appeared to experience particular difficulties accommodating to their organisational culture and to the practices and processes within the organisation particularly at the informal level.They were more likely than non tokens to see their organisation as having negative attitudes to women managers, and they were more likely to identify attitudinal barriers than non tokens. This was particularly borne out by the choice of Men's Club, chosen by nearly three quarters of token women, the highest figure for

any other sub group within the female sample. They also had more difficulty in their working relationships with men than with women and to have more difficulty in this respect than non tokens.

This is supported by data on the level of 'organisational fit' experienced by women MBAs which was found to be related to gender mix so that poor fit was associated with a male dominated organisation and good fit with a sex integrated environment. Women in the partial fit category worked in organisations where the top levels were male dominated but where women were integrated at other levels of the organisation so that some women were in positions of power and influence. In the poor fit category no such women were present - instead women tended to occupy traditional roles such as secretaries and PAs.

This supports Kanter's emphasis of the dynamics of numbers as crucial factors defining women experiences within the organisation and the importance of organisational structures in determining the nature and extent of career barriers. However, Kanter's analysis does not include the effect of degrees of sex integration at different levels within the organisational hierarchy. Ely attempts to address this by specifying the top level as the defining factor so that organisations that have mainly men in positions of power and authority sustain, via sexist attitudes, women's oppressed status. This is supported by Maddock and Parkin (1994) who refer to how the 'tone' of the organisation can be determined by corporate management who have their own brand of leadership and attitudes to women managers. This thesis agrees with part of Ely's hypothesis: women who are at the top of the organisation and who are very much in the minority experience a 'poor' organisational fit. Women

interviewees also attested to the power of individual senior managers to influence the culture and the ease with which women fit into its processes and practices, supporting Maddock and Parkin's view.

At the other end of the scale, Ely suggests that women working in organisations that are sex integrated at senior levels have a different experience: there is less sexism at work, women feel valued and free to express their individuality without constraints of stereotypical views of female behaviour. This conforms with the experiences of the two women in the 'good organisational fit' category. Although the low number (a significant outcome in itself) makes the drawing of reliable conclusions difficult, the findings do suggest that gender mix at senior levels have a profound impact on the nature of the organisational culture.

However, gender mix at the top of the organisation did not emerge as the only defining feature, as Ely suggests. Women in the 'partial fit' category also worked in organisations where women were in the minority at top levels. One key difference, however, was the number and function of women further down the hierarchy. This suggests that the presence of women at middle and junior management levels can influence the culture and make it more accommodating for women. Therefore in terms of an analysis of the significance of tokenism for women's career progress and career experiences it is necessary to consider the management level at which sex integration or otherwise occurs.

Therefore, token women appear to be in more junior positions than non tokens and not to benefit as much from the MBA in terms of seniority though not in terms of

pay. Sex integration appears to affect the ease with which they fit into the organisational culture at the informal level and the extent to which they encounter cultural barriers. Women's sense of 'fit' depends not simply on the gender mix of the organisation but also on the level at which such integration or lack of integration occurs. In terms of the 'informal externality effect' discussed in the previous section, hidden barriers within the informal context are more likely to 'leak' into a disadvantage in the formal environment and ultimately impact on career progress if the organisation is male dominated, if the gender imbalance occurs at senior levels and if women occupy traditionally female and non powerful roles.

On this basis the following proposition can be made:

Gender mix at different management levels determines the extent to which women fit into the organisation culture and the extent to which the 'informal externality effect' occurs.

10.3.4 Organisational Sector

While organisational fit was found to be linked to the gender mix, organisational sector was explored as a possible contributory factor. As Alvesson and Due Billing (1992) warn, it is important to avoid "gender reductionism" ie reducing present organisational arrangements to being just a function of gender while at the same time firmly including gender in a holistic picture of organisations. They refer to different "auras" of gender that are embodied in organisations in different ways so that organisational level and type can be associated with different attitudes towards

gender. Therefore higher organisational levels and technical departments have masculine auras compared with lower organisation levels and people oriented functions. Similarly, as Melamed corroborates, organisational sector may be associated with different "auras" in terms of gender with the private sector having a more masculine ethos than the public sector. On this basis, this enquiry pursued the possibility of sector impacting on the sense of women's organisational fit.

Sector was discussed in section 10.2.4 as the activity and type of employing organisation made up part of the profile of male and female MBAs. However, sector is also an important aspect of the organisation's structure and it is therefore an important factor to investigate in testing the applicability of the organisation-structure approach to male and female MBAs. This also ties in with Melamed's hypothesis, discussed earlier, which suggests that organisational structure in the form of sector is likely to be more important for women than for men. This was not, however, found to be wholly the case from the quantitative data analysis. While there was little difference between public and private sector women in terms of the benefits of the MBA, there was a wide gap by sector for men, confounding Melamed's hypothesis in this respect..

Qualitative data produced less evidence on sectors. While women interviewed came from both private and public sectors, it was not possible to isolate the sectoral impact as it was (to some extent) with the survey data. However, there still remained the possibility that sector was a contributory factor to how comfortable women felt in their organisations with women in the public and charitable sectors perhaps more likely to feel a sense of 'fit' than women in the private sector. Of the six women in the

public/charitable sector, five described the culture as one where they felt largely comfortable. By contrast all six women who worked in the private sector (excluding the three women who were self employed) described a culture where to a greater or lesser degree they felt isolated and out of place. However, with one exception all of the women in the public and charitable sectors were working at management levels where the gender mix was either evenly balanced or where women were in the majority. In other words the degree of comfort experienced could be due to gender mix rather than organisational sector. By the same token, the six private sector women who all experienced some discomfort in terms of their organisational culture worked in organisations where they were very much in the minority at their management level.

Two exceptions to this rule tends to support the gender mix over the organisational sector effect. Anne, far from feeling at ease in her public sector organisation , described a bullying culture where she felt unsafe.The gender mix of her organisation, however, was overwhelmingly male (a boy's comprehensive). Similarly, Susan a deputy head librarian, described a divide in culture within the same organisation and which related to the gender mix. Within her own almost entirely female section the culture was described as supportive. Problems arose with her dealings with outside departments, all male dominated, where she found the culture more competitive and where her formal authority was frequently challenged by junior male staff.

From the interview data alone, therefore, while acknowledging that the public sector is more likely to be in tune with women's needs and to take equal opportunities seriously, gender mix emerged as perhaps more powerful than organisational sector

in determining women's degree of 'organisational fit'. This was certainly borne out by the questionnaire sample in which 'token' women were more likely to experience organisational barriers such as the Men's Club than non tokens and where the difference in this respect was greater than by organisational sector.

Summary

From section 10.2.3 organisational sector has emerged as an important factor behind the differential career progress of private and public sector men but less so in relation to public sector and private sector women. However, the concentration of men in the "fast track" private sector may go some way to account for the differential career progress of men and women subsequent to the MBA. Women do not appear to benefit to the same extent as men from the MBA in the private sector and this has been linked to negative attitudes to women in that sector and to a greater priority given by private sector men to extrinsic factors of pay and status over intrinsic factors such as working relationships which tend to be valued more by women.

From the qualitative data, sector appears to be linked to women's sense of 'organisational fit' so that the public and charitable sector is associated with a greater feeling of comfort with the culture and practices of the organisation. However, this thesis argues that sector is likely to be a secondary factor to gender mix in determining the degree of organisational fit. Instances of poor or partial fit within the public sector combined with a more consistent outcome by gender mix enhanced the latter over the former as an explanatory variable. At the same time, the conformity between women by sector over the experience of the Men's Club and associated

barriers and lack of conformity between token and non token women in this respect (with token women more likely to identify these barriers) served to further enhance gender mix as the defining factor in women's sense of organisational fit.

This means that the 'informal externality effect' referred to above, ie the tendency for informal barriers to leak into the formal context and disadvantage women in their careers, will be affected more by gender mix than by sector though sector may well be a secondary or contributory factor. This is supported not only by the above argument but by the slower relative progress of token when compared to public sector women. In other words, there is greater conformity between public and private sector women than there is between token and non token women in this respect so that token women appear to be more disadvantaged in relative terms.

Gender mix is more likely to be associated with women's poor sense of fit than sector and is more likely to be associated with hidden barriers that impact on career progress in the form of the 'informal externality effect'.

10.3.5 Proposition Two: Summary and Conclusions

Proposition 2 stated that despite the MBA women would not progress as much as men because of career barriers within the organisation which the MBA would be unable to overcome. These barriers have been seen as being hidden within the structure and culture of the organisation (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Davidson, 1991; Maddock and Parkin, 1994;) and has led some theorists (eg Cockburn, 1991) to refer to a 'corporate patriarchy' which encapsulates the dynamics of domination

and subordination within the corporation.

Cultural barriers have been found to be the key to understanding women's experience in the organisation. The popularity of the Men's Club as a barrier experienced and as the largest single barrier, with its implicit assumptions of exclusivity, marginalisation and favouritism, suggests that forms of corporate patriarchy are influential in defining women's experiences at work and that these influences increase with the minority status of women. This in turn determines women's sense of 'fit' within the organisation and would appear to operate more rigorously at the informal level. At the formal level the MBA may well have given women a stamp of approval from men so that they achieve a stronger sense of 'fit' within this setting. At the informal level, degrees of fit were related not only to the relationship between the formal and the informal organisation but to gender mix and, to a lesser extent, organisational sector. This thesis argues that it is gender mix which appears to be the more influential of structural institutional factors in determining women's sense of organisational fit and that the level at which degrees of sex integration occurs is an underlying factor and causal influence on how comfortable women feel within the organisation.

There is consequently less equivocation over research proposition two compared to research proposition one. The lower impact of the MBA in terms of salary and status as outlined in section 10.2.1 can be explained by barriers which operate to disadvantage women. Within the female sample, token women have been found to be in less senior positions both before and after the MBA compared to non token women even though there are no significant differences in terms of individual profiles or

attributes. The barriers women experience are largely located within the culture of the organisation and intensify with gender mix so that token women are more likely to complain of cultural and attitudinal barriers than non token women. The culture therefore serves to support men and reflects their attitudes and interests (Cockburn, 1991). Full membership of the 'club' enables men to gain an understanding of the politics of the organisation, to hear and act on new information early and to forge networks and friendships at work which can then be used to their advantage. All these factors were discussed by women as assets from which they were effectively barred. Therefore the activities associated with a corporate patriarchy which operates at the informal level may well impact negatively on women within the formal context and may explain their slower progress subsequent to the MBA. This impact has been termed the "informal externality effect" and this thesis argues that the impact will be greater in organisations which are male dominated at senior levels and where women occupy traditional roles.

This supports the organisation structure approach which argues that hidden barriers prevent women from climbing the corporate hierarchy and that structural features of the organisation can override individual factors such as qualification levels. It also supports those elements of Melamed's gender specific model of career success which argue for the importance of structural organisational factors such as sector and the numerical distribution of women, in women's overall career success.

10.4 Contribution to Theory and Building a Model of Qualifications and Managerial Career Success

10.4.1 Women MBAs as a New Area of Study.

Considerable research has been conducted into women managers and the disadvantages they experience at work and interest has been shown in role of the MBA in management education and career success. Much of the latter work, however, has been US based and has tended to concentrate on full time MBAs. This thesis represents a study of women and the MBA in the UK and, for reasons outlined in Chapter Four (section 4.9.2) which relate to the need for consistency and comparability, focuses on men and women who have studied for their qualification part time. It builds on existing work on women managers, on the role of qualifications and career success as well as covering new ground by focusing on a particular group of managers and a particular type of qualification namely the MBA.

Therefore, the question Does an MBA help Women? has filled a current research gap identified in Chapter One and has enabled the debate between the sex difference approach within liberal feminism and the organisation structure approach within radical feminism to be tested by applying them to this particular case. It has also allowed an assessment to take place of the applicability of Melamed's gender specific model of career success which has as its frame of reference elements both of the above approaches.

10.4.2 New Perspectives: The Role of Individual Factors, Qualifications and Melamed's Model of Career Success

The sex difference approach assumes key difference between men and women which is thought to explain their differential career progress. Significant differences in terms of family circumstances and academic background emerged from this sample of male and female MBA graduates but this thesis argues that neither factor is sufficiently strong to explain women's disadvantage in relation to men subsequent to the MBA. Differences between male and female MBA graduates in terms of individual characteristics are therefore unlikely to account for their differential career progress.

A further aspect of this approach is that an enhancement of individual characteristics would help women to compete on an equal footing with men. In a similar vein, Melamed hypothesises that job relevant factors such as qualification levels will have a greater impact on women than on men because of women's need for extra attributes to compensate for a lack of credibility caused by their gender. Qualifications are therefore likely to enhance women's career success more than men. This thesis proposes that in order to understand the impact of the MBA a distinction needs to be made between extrinsic and intrinsic career factors. It suggests, in support of Melamed's hypothesis, that the MBA helps women more than men in terms of the latter because of their initial disadvantage in this respect. This enhanced credibility also helps to give them a stamp of approval from men within the formal work setting. The MBA is less successful in terms of extrinsic factors such as pay and management status and this thesis argues that this is due to various barriers to their careers. On this

basis, the sex difference approach has limited application for this special group of women managers. Individual differences are not strongly related to differential career progress and the MBA, while enhancing intrinsic factors and conferring credibility and status on women, does not help women in terms of extrinsic factors as much as men.

10.4.3 New Perspectives: Career Barriers

Radical feminism and the organisation structure approach emphasise the role of structures within the organsiation and of patriarchal power relations as explanatory factors behind women managers' slow career progress in relation to men. Similarly, Melamed hypothesises that organisational structures such as sector will have a greater impact on women than on men who are likely to progress irrespective of sector or gender mix.

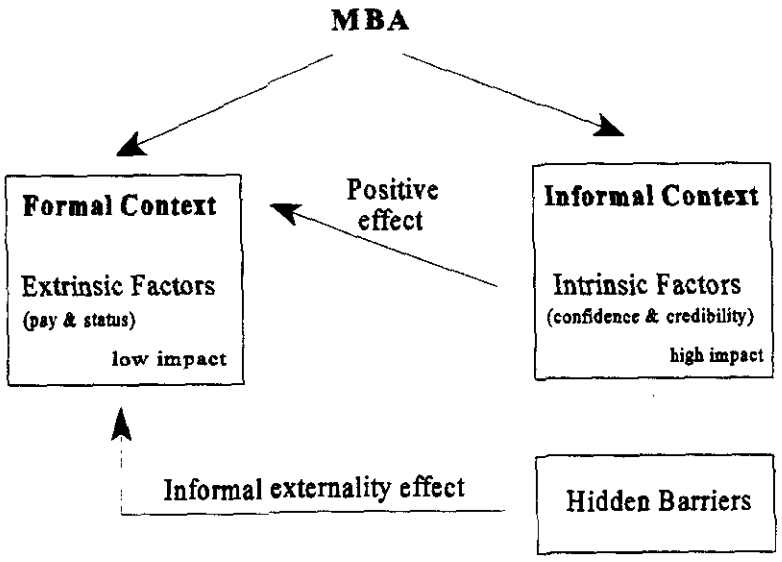
Results from this thesis conforms with much of previous work on the role of hidden barriers on women's careers (Kanter, 1977; Marshall, 1984; Maddock & Parkin, 1994) and of the role of 'corporate patriarchy' in creating a environment in which women do not flourish. The existence of a male culture within the organisation which serves to exclude and marginalise women was evidenced by the high proportion of women choosing the Men's Club over other structural and individual factors.

This thesis therefore conforms with existing theory on the importance of hidden barriers for women managers. At the same time it has added to existing theory. It has done this firstly by specifying the importance of the formal and the informal

environment and drawing attention to women's sense of 'fit' within this context. Secondly, it has explored the implications of hidden barriers in the informal context for women's sense of 'organisational fit'. Thirdly, it has suggested that gender mix and the hierarchical level at which the gender imbalance occurs is associated with different levels of organisational fit and that gender mix largely determines the extent of the 'informal externality effect' ie the extent to which hidden barriers 'leak' into the formal organisation and impact on career success.

This thesis therefore supports the organisation-structure perspective within radical feminism which emphasises the role of organisational structures in understanding women managers' career progress but has added to theory by specifying particular levels of gender mix and the differential impact these levels are likely to have on the formal and the informal context. Melamed takes one aspect of organisational structure, namely sector, and hypothesises that this feature is likely to impact more on women than on men. Given the narrow gap between public and private sector women and the wide gap between public sector and private sector men, this thesis argues that Melamed has overemphasised the importance of sector for women and underestimated the importance of sector for men. In addition, it argues that sector is of secondary importance to understanding women's career progress than gender mix.

10.4.4 A Model of Qualifications and Management Career Success



This model emphasises the differential impact of the MBA on the formal and the informal context and on intrinsic and extrinsic career factors. For reasons of logic and simplicity, it has located extrinsic factors within the formal and intrinsic factors within the informal environment. Extrinsic factors such as pay and management status are strongly associated with the formal position of a post holder. Intrinsic factors such as credibility, confidence and satisfying working relationships, while

impacting on the formal setting, have been located within the informal context on the grounds that these are not directly related to the formal position of a post holder and may have strong implications for the informal setting. Good working relationships for example are likely to be followed through into the informal context in ways in which high pay, as an extrinsic benefit, does not.

Within the informal context (to the right hand side of the model) the MBA has a high impact on intrinsic factors such as confidence, credibility and work satisfaction. This enhanced credibility and status then has a positive effect on women's sense of fit within the formal context, located on the left hand side of the model. This is reflected in the direction of the arrow, labelled "positive effect". Within the formal context (to the left hand side of the model) the MBA has a lower impact on extrinsic factors such as pay and management status.

Within the informal context, hidden barriers impact on formal pay and status via the Informal Externality Effect which is shown by the direction of the arrow at the bottom of the model. As we have seen, these hidden barriers determine women's sense of organisational fit. The intensity and nature of these barriers are in turn determined by gender mix with organisational sector as a possible contributory factor. The extent to which these hidden barriers 'leak' into the formal context and help explain women's career progress, the 'informal externality effect', depends on these factors. The "Informal Externality Effect" accordingly captures and incorporates the importance of gender mix in the assessment of the impact of the MBA on women managers' careers.

The MBA therefore has a differential impact on women and men and the nature of that impact depends to a large extent on whether the formal context, where it is appropriate to consider extrinsic factors of pay and status or the informal context, where intrinsic factors of confidence, credibility and good working relationships are likely to be located, is considered. The high impact the MBA has on intrinsic factors, in particular credibility, itself feeds into a sense of acceptance and 'fit' within the formal context. The lower impact the MBA has on pay and management status can be seen as determined largely by gender mix which is reflected in the strength of the informal externality effect. Where women are in the minority at senior levels and where other women tend to occupy traditional roles , women are more likely to have a poor organisational fit. Barriers translate into overt hostility and resistance, the informal externality effect may be strong and this may have a detrimental effect on women's career progress. Where gender mix is evenly distributed at all levels women tend to have a good fit, experience of career barriers is very low and the informal externality effect will be correspondingly weak. This will have a beneficial effect on women's career progress. Where women are in the minority at senior levels but where other women occupy positions of power lower down the hierarchy, women have a partial fit where career barriers are more benign and while this 'middle level' was not tested in the survey, it would be reasonable to expect some informal externality effect

Therefore the lower pay and status that women MBAs receive subsequent to their qualification can be explained by the detrimental effects of gender mix via the informal externality effect. In this way the study conforms with findings of Kanter, Marshall and Ely all of whom argued the same principle. However, this thesis argues

that degrees of organisational fit are associated with gender mix at different levels of the organisation and that these levels determine the strength of the informal externality effect. Therefore, while Kanter does not specify the importance of the management level at which the imbalance occurs, and while Ely specifies that it is gender mix at senior levels that it the defining factor, this thesis argues that gender mix at different levels of the hierarchy can determine women's sense of organisational fit, the barriers they experience and the strength of the informal externality effect.

This thesis started out by assessing the relative applicability of the sex difference and the organisational structure approach for explaining the differential career progress of male and female MBA graduates. It argues that in attempting to answer the question: Does an MBA help women, it is less appropriate to think in terms of the traditional individual versus structural debate and more appropriate to consider the impact of the qualification on the formal and the informal context and the factors that lie behind the relationship between the two. At the same time, it is important to note that conclusions concerning the role of individual factors may be specific to women MBAs while the significance of structure and gender mix may well apply to women managers as a whole. On the first point, male and female MBAs are high fliers. Their high level of qualification and skill may reduce the significance of individual differences for career success. This means that the conclusion that individual differences are unlikely to be sufficiently strong to explain differential career success may not apply to *all* women managers because they have not enhanced their knowledge and skill to the same extent and they may not possess the levels determination that are necessary to succeed. On the second point, while the model suggests the importance of the formal and informal context and the type of benefit

received in analysing the impact of the MBA, arguments relating to the significance of gender mix will not be specific to women MBAs but will have implications for women managers as a whole.

10.5 Implications for Future Research

Two areas in particular have arisen from this study as deserving of further research. The first concerns variations within the female sample that have emerged in terms of age. The rapid career progress of younger women, the lower average age of women managers and the implications of certain differences in attitudes and perceptions of career barriers are issues that have arisen from this and other research. Reasons for these differences and trends are unclear. In this survey, the significance of age could only be explored through the quantitative data (women interviewees were all within the same age range). A further study might specifically incorporate age as a factor into the interview sample in order to investigate what impact age might have.

A second area of interest concerns male managers. Research on women has tended to treat male managers as a homogeneous group, occupants of power and advantage and controlling the corporate culture which reflects their interests and attitudes. While recent work on men has uncovered interesting interrelations between men, masculinities and management (eg Collinson and Hearn 1996) the underlying assumption is still that men are the possessors of advantage and power. This research project has uncovered some interesting variations and suggests that this assumption may be over simplistic. The fact that some men complained of a Men's Club barrier (8.4%) suggests that men too may be disadvantaged by the "clubbiness" and power

of other men. In addition, while private sector men appear to operate on a fast track of career progress, this is not shared by men in the public sector who, in some ways, are more pessimistic, less mobile and perhaps more disadvantaged than their female counterparts in that sector. Therefore organisational structures in the form of sector can also be detrimental to men. Reasons for the relative lack of success of public sector men is a field that deserves further enquiry and may suggest that a full understanding of the complexities that serve to disadvantage women in management also must take on board the different types of, but possibly interrelated, complexities that serve to disadvantage men.

10.6 Reflections on the Research Process

Various difficulties encountered in the course of this research have been discussed throughout the thesis. These include problems identifying a theoretical framework within the women in management literature, problems concerning statistical testing and problems encountered in the course of interviewing male respondents. While in some cases the learning process involved in doing research has enabled the researcher to identify problems together with appropriate remedies for future reference (for example the need to sacrifice some detail to allow for statistical testing), other areas of difficulty had less obvious solutions. In terms of the latter, the researcher felt that problems encountered in interviews with male MBAs were not fully overcome and that this aspect of the research process was not a success.

At the outset of the research, the researcher struggled with the apparent lack of clear theoretical perspectives within the women in management literature and it took some

time to develop a framework for analysis. Even so, continual doubts existed as to the appropriateness of the framework and the extent to which it could be developed in relation to women MBAs. By the final stages of the research project, it was realised that these struggles with theory and the position of this research project within a larger framework were an inevitable part of the research process and of "theorizing" (Weick, 1995) which sees theory as a process rather than as a product. This helped to demystify both the role and content of theory and the extent to which this research project was fulfilling its 'theoretical obligations'. Runkel and Runkel (1984) refer to the "interim struggles" in the process of theorizing and Weick sees theories as "approximations" in a journey in which any one theoretical outcome can be seen as "placemarkers". Accordingly, it is hoped that in addressing the question Does an MBA help Women?, this thesis has summarised progress, given some direction within the women in management literature and has contained evidence of the interim struggles that have taken place.

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APPENDIX ONE

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

THE MBA AND CAREER PROGRESSION

ABOUT YOU

1. **Are you**

   Male ☐

   Female ☐

2. **Which age group are you in?**

   Under 24 ☐

   25 - 34 ☐

   35 - 44 ☐

   45 - 54 ☐

   55 - 64 ☐

   over 65 ☐

3. **Which was your highest qualification prior to doing your MBA?**

   O'Level/GCSE or equivalent ☐

   A'Level or equivalent ☐

   Degree or equivalent (eg: HND) ☐

   Other (please specify) ☐

   _____

4. **If you are a graduate or have an HND/HNC what is the main subject of your degree/diploma?**

   _____

5. **Do you hold any professional qualifications?**

   No ☐

   Yes, (please specify) ☐

   _____

6. **In what year did you receive you MBA qualifications?**

   Year _____

7. **Are you?**

   Married/living with partner ☐

   Divorced/separated ☐

   Single ☐

   Other (please specify) ☐

   _____

8. **How many children do you have living with you in the following age ranges?**

	Number
Children under 2 years	☐
Children 2 - 5 years	☐
Children 6 - 10 years	☐
Children 11 - 16 years	☐
Children 16 - 18 years	☐
Children over 18 years	☐

9. **If you have, or had, caring responsibilities for a child how do you feel that this has affected your career?**

- It has adversely affected my career ☐
- It has benefited my career ☐
- It has not affected my career ☐
- Don't know ☐
- No caring responsibilities ☐

YOUR EMPLOYMENT AND THE MBA

If you are not currently working, please answer the following questions by describing your last employment.

10. **What is your job title?**

_____

11. **Do you work?**

- Full-time ☐
- Part-time ☐
- Job-share ☐
- Flexi-time ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

_____

12. **Is your organisation?**

- Public sector ☐
- Partnership ☐
- Sole trader ☐
- Public company ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

_____

13. **What is the main activity of your organisation?**

- Manufacturing/Production ☐
- Leisure ☐
- Utilities ☐
- Financial Services ☐
- Retail/Distribution/Transport ☐
- Marketing/Sales/Advertising ☐
- Construction/Engineering ☐
- Education/Training ☐
- Professional/Scientific/Consultancy ☐
- Other services ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

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14. **How many employees does your organisation have in the UK?**

- Fewer than 10 ☐
- 11 - 20 ☐
- 21 - 50 ☐
- 51 - 100 ☐
- 101 - 1,000 ☐
- over 1,000 ☐

15. **To get an idea of whether you work mainly with men or with women, can you please indicate the number of men and women who work at the same or similar level to you within your organisation and with whom you have day to day or regular working contact.**

	Number
Men	☐
Women	☐

16. **Can you indicate the number of men and women who work at a senior level to you within your organisation and who have some responsibility for an area of your own work.**

	Number
Men	☐
Women	☐

17. **Please indicate your management function immediately before you started your MBA course and now.**

	Before MBA	Now
Administration	☐	☐
Management Services	☐	☐
Finance/Accounting	☐	☐
Education/Training	☐	☐
Personnel/IR	☐	☐
Production/Manufacturing	☐	☐
Computing/IT	☐	☐
Development/Strategic	☐	☐
Marketing/Sales	☐	☐
Purchasing/Contracting	☐	☐
Corporate Affairs/PR	☐	☐
Management Consultancy	☐	☐
General Management	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐

_____

_____

18. **Please indicate your management role immediately before you started your MBA course and now.**

	Before MBA	Now
Chair/Chief Executive	☐	☐
Director/Partner	☐	☐
Non-Executive Director	☐	☐
Senior Manager	☐	☐
Middle Manager	☐	☐
Junior Manager	☐	☐
Professional/Technical	☐	☐
Self Employed	☐	☐
Other (please specify)	☐	☐

_____

_____

19. **Please indicate your salary level immediately before you started your MBA course and now.**

	Before MBA	Now
Under £15,000	☐	☐
15,000 - 20,000	☐	☐
21,000 - 25,000	☐	☐
26,000 - 30,000	☐	☐
31,000 - 35,000	☐	☐
36,000 - 40,000	☐	☐
41,000 - 45,000	☐	☐
Over 45,000	☐	☐

20. **Do you think your MBA has helped your career?**

- Yes, to a great extent ☐
- Yes, to some extent ☐
- It has not helped ☐

21. **How many promotions have you had either within your existing organisation or through job changes since you completed your MBA?**

	Number
Promotions	☐

22. **How has your career progressed since you completed your MBA?**

- Progression within your own organisation ☐
- Progression with another organisation ☐
- Sideways change ☐
- Set up own business ☐
- Changed career completely ☐
- No change ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

_____

23. **How would you describe the promotion prospects of your present position?**

- Good ☐
- Fair ☐
- Poor ☐

24. **How long have you been in your present position?**

Less than 1 year	☐
1 - 2 years	☐
2 - 4 years	☐
4 - 6 years	☐
Over 6 years	☐

25. **Have you remained in your present position**

Longer than you anticipated	☐
Less time than you anticipated	☐
The time you anticipated	☐

26. **Can you please rank your motives 1-8 for taking an MBA where 1 is the most important motive and 8 is the least important motive.**

	Rank 1-8
Improve job opportunities	☐
Change career/direction	☐
Obtain business qualification	☐
Increase salary	☐
Intellectual stimulation	☐
Increase self confidence	☐
Obtain general skills	☐
Improve performance in current job	☐

MBA GRADUATES AND CAREER BARRIERS

27. **How important are the following to you?**

	Very important	Fairly important	Not important
Salary and status	☐	☐	☐
Job satisfaction	☐	☐	☐
Working relationships	☐	☐	☐
Marriage/Partner	☐	☐	☐
Children	☐	☐	☐

Have you encountered any barriers in your career to date?

(You may tick more than one box)

- Inflexible working patterns ☐
- Lack of training provision ☐
- Insufficient education ☐
- Family commitments ☐
- Lack of adequate childcare ☐
- Lack of personal motivation/confidence ☐
- Lack of career guidance ☐
- Prejudice of colleagues ☐
- Social pressures (eg: from parents, friends) ☐
- 'Men's club' network ☐
- Sexual discrimination ☐
- No barriers ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

Which of these do you view as the <u>single</u> biggest barrier to your career?

(Please tick <u>one</u> box only)

- Inflexible working patterns ☐
- Lack of training provision ☐
- Insufficient education ☐
- Family commitments ☐
- Lack of adequate childcare ☐
- Lack of personal motivation/confidence ☐
- Lack of career guidance ☐
- Prejudice of colleagues ☐
- Social pressures (eg: from parents, friends) ☐
- 'Men's club' network ☐
- Sexual discrimination ☐
- No barriers ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

---

30. **To what extent has your MBA qualification helped you to overcome these barriers?**

- To a large extent ☐
- To some extent ☐
- It has not helped ☐
- Please give details

_____

_____

31. **What pressures do you experience in your work role?**

(You may tick more than one box)

- Long hours ☐
- Expectations of male colleagues/clients ☐
- Expectations of female colleagues/clients ☐
- Working relations with men ☐
- Working relations with women ☐
- Conflicting demands of home and work ☐
- Childcare problems ☐
- No pressures ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

_____

32. **Which of these do you consider to be the single biggest pressure?**

(Please tick one box only)

- Long hours ☐
- Expectations of male colleagues/clients ☐
- Expectations of female colleagues/clients ☐
- Working relations with men ☐
- Working relations with women ☐
- Conflicting demands of home and work ☐
- Childcare problems ☐
- No pressures ☐
- Other (please specify) ☐

_____

33. **What is the overall attitude to women managers from others within your organisation?**

- Very positive ☐
- Positive ☐
- Neutral ☐
- Negative ☐
- Very negative ☐

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

PLEASE RETURN IT IN THE PRE-PAID ENVELOPE TO:

RUTH SIMPSON
THE BUSINESS SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH LONDON
277-281 STAPLETON HOUSE
HOLLOWAY ROAD
LONDON N7 8HN

COMMENTS

I would like to include in my report which will result from this survey, comments by individual MBA graduates. Please use the space below to give your views on any of the issues covered by the survey. If you would like your comments to be attributed , please give your name and address.

[YOUR RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS]

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

INTERVIEWS

Part of my survey will involve interviews with a smaller sample of women MBA graduates. If you are willing to be interviewed could you give your name and telephone number?

Name _____

Tel No. _____

APPENDIX TWO

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES: CHAPTER FOUR

Table 1: Age by Sex

	Women %	Men %
Under 24	0	0.7
25-34	35.4	22.8
35-44	45.5	54.4
45-54	19.2	21.3
55-64	0	0.7

NS

Table 2 Age by sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
under 35	13.7	10.0	59.5	28.3
over 35	86.3	90.0	40.5	71.7
N	51	30	37	99

Public Sector
NS

Private Sector
P=0.00079

Chi square=11.26071

Table 3: Qualification by Sex

	Women %	Men %
O' level/GCSE/Equivalent	0	1.5
A' level or equivalent	3.1	5.2
Degree or equivalent (eg HND)	77.6	74.8
Other	19.4	18.5

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 4: Marriage by Sex

	Women %	Men %
Married/Living with Partner	71.7	91.2
Divorced/Separated	3.0	5.9
Single	24.2	2.9
Other	1.0	1.0
N	99	136

P=0.00001
Chi square: 26.61145
(cells with minimum expected frequency < 5: 37.5%)

Table 5: Male and Female MBAs with Children

	Women %	Men %
With Children	36.4	67.4
Without Children	63.6	32.6
N	99	135

P=0.00001
Chi square: 19.86170

Table 6: Married MBAs with Children

	Women %	Men %
With Children	49.3	70.2
Without Children	50.7	29.8
N	71	124

P= 0.00377
Chi square: 6.73614

Table 7: MBAs with Children and Caring Responsibility

	Women %	Men %
Adverse Effect	51.5	8.1
Beneficial effect	9.1	4.7
No effect	21.2	44.2
Don't know	12.1	9.3
No caring responsibility	6.1	33.7
N	33	86

P=0.00000
Chi square: 33.58959

Table 8: Caring Responsibility by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Adverse Effect	16.1	0	23.3	9.1
Beneficial Effect	0	0	5.0	5.1
No Effect	9.7	29.0	6.7	32.3
Don't Know	0	3.2	6.7	7.1
No Caring Responsibility	74.2	67.7	58.3	46.5
N	31	31	60	99

Under 35
P=0.02811
Chi square=9.909091
(Cells with expected frequency < 5: 50%)

Over 35
P=0.00181
Chi square=17.14203

Table 9: Age by Sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Under 24	0	0	0	1.0
25-34	13.7	10.0	59.5	27.3
35-44	58.8	70.0	29.7	50.5
45-54	27.5	16.7	10.8	21.2
55-64	0	3.3	0	0
N	51	30	37	99

Private sector
P=0.00644
Chi square:12.29523
Cells with minimum expected frequency < 5: 25%

Public Sector
NS

Table 10: Marriage by sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Married	74.5	90.0	63.9	90.9
Single/Separated/Divorced	25.5	10.0	36.1	9.1
N	51	30	36	99

Private Sector
P=0.00017
Chi square= 14.13017

Public Sector
P=0.09185
Chi square= 2.85928

NS: Not significant

Table 11: Parenthood by Sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
With Children	33.3	73.3	43.2	64.3
Without Children	66.6	26.7	56.8	35.7
N	51	30	37	98

Private sector
P=0.02687
Chi square= 4.489937

Public Sector
P=0.00050
Chi square= 12.10549

Table 12: Organisational Activity by Sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Manufacturing/Production	0	10	13.5	34.3
Leisure	0	0	5.4	1.0
Utilities	2.0	6.7	10.8	7.1
Financial Services	2.0	3.3	16.2	32.3
Retail/Distribution/Transport	3.9	0	2.7	4.0
Marketing/Sales/Advertising	0	0	10.8	1.0
Construction/Engineering	0	3.3	0	4.0
Education/Training	33.3	36.7	13.5	0
Professional/Scientific/Consultancy	5.9	20.0	13.5	12.1
Other Services	52.9	20.0	13.5	4.0
N	51	30	37	99

Table 13: MBA Graduates in Full and Part time Work

	Women %	Men %
Full Time	95.6	96.9
Part time	2.2	1.5
Job Share	0	0
Flexi Time	2.2	0.8
N	90	130

NS

Table 14: Size of Employing Organisation

	Women %	Men %
Fewer than 10	10.0	7.8
11-20	4.4	6.3
21-50	6.7	4.7
51-100	10.0	5.5
101-1,000	20.0	25.8
over 1,000	48.9	50.0
N	90	128

P=0.66525
Chi square:3.22559

NS: Not significant

Table15: Importance of Work and Family by Sex

	Women %		Men %		
	Very Important	Not Important	Very Important	Not Important	P value
Salary and Status	28.6	12.1	35.4	3.1	0.02720
Job Satisfaction	91.2	0	88.5	0	0.51038
Working Relationships	60.4	3.3	48.5	3.8	0.21124
Marriage/Partner	72.5*	17.6*	84.6*	1.5*	0.00009
Children	40.7**	45.1**	69.2**	17.7**	0.00002
N	90	90	122	122	
*Married sample	92.2	4.7	89.8	1.9	0.01630
**Sample with children	87.9	6.1	93.0	0	0.07027

Table 16: Importance of Work and Family (Public Sector)

	Women %		Men %	
	Very Important	Not Important	Very Important	Not Important
Salary and Status	25.5	11.8	20.0	3.3
Job Satisfaction	90.2	0	80.0	0
Working Relationships	66.7	2.0	60.0	0
Marriage and Partner	72.5	19.6	86.7	0
Children	37.3	51.0	83.3	13.3
N	51		30	

Table 17: Importance of Work and Family (Private Sector)

	Women %		Men %	
	Very important	Not important	Very important	Not important
Salary and Status	29.7	13.5	40.4	3.0
Job Satisfaction	91.9	0	91.9	0
Working Relations	51.4	5.4	45.5	5.1
Marriage/Partner	70.3	16.2	83.8	2.0
Children	45.9	40.5	64.6	19.2
N	37		99	

Table 18: Importance of Work and Family (by Age)

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Salary and Status	32.3	38.7	26.7	34.3
Job Satisfaction	93.5	96.8	90.0	85.9
Working Relations	71.0	51.6	55.0	47.5
Marriage/Partner	87.1	96.8	65.0	80.5
Children	32.3	61.3	45.0	71.7
N	31	31		

Table 19: Management Function by Sector before MBA

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Administration	18.6	15.4	8.8	5.6
Management Services	4.7	3.8	5.9	5.6
Finance/Accounting	2.3	7.7	14.7	16.9
Education/Training	23.3	15.4	5.9	3.4
Personnel/IR	4.7	0	8.8	0
Production Manufacturing	2.3	11.5	5.9	20.2
Computing/IT	4.7	7.7	14.7	13.5
Development/Strategic	4.7	7.7	2.9	4.5
Marketing Sales	0	3.8	11.8	18.0
Purchasing/Contracting	2.3	0	5.9	0
Corporate Affairs/PR	0	0	2.9	0
Management Consultancy	9.3	0	0	1.1
General Management	23.3	26.9	11.8	11.2
N	43	26	34	89

Table 20: Management Function By Sector after MBA

	Public sector %		Private sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Administration	8.5	10.0	5.6	2.2
Management Services	2.1	3.3	8.3	3.2
Finance/Accounting	0	0	2.8	6.5
Education/Training	21.3	20.0	5.6	2.2
Personnel/IR	0	0	8.3	1.1
Production/Manufacturing	0	3.3	2.8	15.1
Computing/IT	4.3	3.3	8.3	7.5
Development/Strategic	17.0	3.3	11.1	9.7
Marketing/Sales	0	0	11.1	18.3
Purchasing/Contracting	2.1	0	2.8	3.2
Corporate Affairs/PR	4.3	0	0	0
Management Consultancy	8.5	13.3	16.7	4.3
General Management	31.9	43.3	16.7	26.9
N				

Table 21: Management Role by Sector before MBA

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Senior Roles	21.3	14.8	21.6	27.4
Middle Management	53.2	44.4	18.9	32.6
Junior Management	12.8	11.1	32.4	17.9
Professional/Technical	12.8	29.6	21.6	18.9
Self Employed	0	0	5.4	3.2
N	47	27	37	95

Public Sector
NS

Private Sector
NS

Table 22 Married Women and Management Role

	Married %		Single %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MB
Chair/Chief Executive	0	0	0	0
Director/Partner	1.6	6.3	0	3.8
Non Executive Director	0	3.1	0	3.8
Senior Manager	17.2	28.1	19.2	30.8
Middle Manager	37.5	32.8	30.8	42.3
Junior Manager	17.2	3.1	34.6	11.5
Professional/Technical	15.6	10.9	15.4	3.8
Self Employed	3.1	7.8	0	0
N	64	64	26	26

NS: Not significant

Table 23 Management Role by Parenthood (women)

	With Children %		Without Children %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After M
Senior Roles	17.2	50.0	22.8	45.6
Middle Management	41.4	33.3	35.1	40.4
Junior/Professional	41.4	16.7	42.1	14.0
N	29	30	57	57

NS

Table 24: Management Role by Sector after MBA

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Senior Roles	39.6	39.3	40.5	49.0
Middle Management	47.9	32.1	27.0	29.2
Junior Management	4.2	7.1	8.1	4.2
Professional/Technical	8.3	21.4	10.8	11.5
Self Employed	0	0	13.5	6.3
N	48	28	37	96

NS

Table 25: Pay by Management Level before the MBA (figures rounded to the neare thousand)

	Senior %		Middle %		Junior %	
£000	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	M
Under 25	60.0	52.4	66.7	73.0	69.2	82
25-35	35.0	31.7	30.3	21.6	30.8	13
Over 35	5.0	15.9	3.0	5.4	0	4.
N	40	63	33	37	13	23

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 26: Pay by Management Level after MBA (figures rounded to the nearest thousand)

	Senior %		Middle %		Junior %	
£000	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Under 25	24.4	9.5	30.3	29.7	46.2	34.8
25 -35	53.7	34.9	45.5	45.9	53.8	60.9
Over 35	22.0	55.6	24.2	24.3	0	4.3
N	41	63	33	37	13	23

Senior Management P= 0.00218 Chi square: 12.25833
Middle Management NS
Junior Management NS

Table 27: Promotion by Sex

Number of Promotions	Women %	Men %
0	37.8	36.5
1	37.8	32.5
2	20.0	20.6
3	4.4	8.7
4	0	1.6
N	90	126

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 28: Promotion by Sector

	Public Sector		Private Sector	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
0	45.1	43.3	27.8	34.7
1	37.3	33.3	41.7	31.6
2	15.7	20.0	22.2	21.1
3	2.0	3.3	8.3	10.5
4	0	0	0	2.1
N	51	30	36	95

Public Sector
NS

Private Sector
NS

Table 29: Promotion by age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
0	26.7	17.2	43.3	42.3
1	43.3	37.9	35.0	30.9
2	26.7	31.0	16.7	17.5
3	3.3	13.8	5.0	7.2
4	0	0	0	2.1
N	30	29	60	97

Under 35
NS

Over 35
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 30: Career Progression by Sex

	Women %	Men %
Progression within own organisation	32.1	39.4
Progression with another organisation	26.2	16.5
Sideways change	13.1	11.0
Set up own business	6.0	5.7
Changed career	4.8	8.7
No change/other	17.9	18.9
N	84	127

NS

Table 31: Career Progression by Sector

	Public %		Private %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Progression with same organisation	32.6	37.9	31.4	40.2
Progression with another organisation	23.9	3.4	25.7	21.3
Sideways change	15.2	20.7	11.4	8.2
Set up own business	2.2	0	11.4	7.2
Changed career	2.2	13.8	8.6	7.2
No change/Other	23.9	24.1	11.4	16.5
N	46	29	35	97

Public Sector

NS

Private Sector

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 32: Progression by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	M
Progression with same organisation	34.5	62.1	30.9	3
Progression with another organisation	31.0	13.8	23.6	1
Sideways change	13.8	3.4	12.7	1
Set up own business	6.9	10.3	5.5	4
Changed career	0	6.9	7.3	9
No change/Other	13.8	3.4	18.2	2
N	29	29	55	9

Under 35
NS

Over 35
NS

Table 33: Career Prospects by sex

	Women %	Men %
Good	22.0	22.3
Fair	41.8	41.5
Poor	36.3	36.2
N	91	130

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 34: Career Prospects by Sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Good	15.7	6.7	32.4	27.3
Fair	41.2	43.3	37.8	40.4
Poor	43.1	50.0	29.7	32.3
N	51	30	37	99

NS

Table 35: Career Prospects by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Good	29.0	41.9	18.3	16.2
Fair	45.2	38.7	40.0	42.4
Poor	25.8	19.4	41.7	41.4
N	31	31	60	99

Under 35
NS

Over 35
NS

Table 36: Time Spent in Present Position by Sex

	Women %	Men %
Up to 2 years	69.2	60.9
2-4 years	14.3	24.2
Over 4 years	16.5	14.8
N	91	128

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 37: Time Spent in Present Position by Sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
up to 2 years	62.7	53.3	78.4	63.9
2-4 years	19.6	30.0	8.1	22.7
over 4 years	17.6	16.7	13.5	13.4
N	51	30	37	97

Public Sector
NS

Private Sector
NS

Table 38: Time Spent in Present Position by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Less than 1 year	38.7	46.7	30.0	30.6
1-2	35.5	46.7	36.7	20.4
2-4	12.9	6.7	15.0	29.6
4-6	12.9	0	18.3	19.4
N	31	30	60	98

Under 35
NS

Over 35
NS

Table 39: Length of Time Anticipated being Spent in Present Position by Sex

	Women %	Men %
Longer than anticipated	20.5	23.1
Less time than anticipated	8.4	10.7
The time anticipated	71.1	66.1
N	83	121

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 40: Length of Time Anticipated being spent in Present Position by Sector and Sex

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Longer than anticipated	24.5	32.1	16.1	20.7
Less time than anticipated	8.2	3.6	9.7	13.0
The time anticipated	67.3	64.3	74.2	66.3
N	49	28	31	92

NS

Table 41: Length of Time Anticipated being spent in Present Position by Age and Sex

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Longer than anticipated	14.3	10.3	23.6	27.2
Less time than anticipated	3.6	17.2	10.9	8.7
The time anticipated	82.1	72.4	65.5	64.1
N	28	29	55	92

Under 35
NS

Over 35
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 42: Motives for taking the MBA by Sex

	Top Motive		Bottom Motive	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Improve Job Opportunities	22.0	24.6	2.2	0.8
Change Career/Direction	14.3	13.1	9.9	19.2
Obtain Business Qualification	14.3	15.4	4.4	4.6
Increase Salary	2.2	3.8	23.1	13.8
Intellectual Stimulation	19.8	18.5	2.2	1.5
Increase Self Confidence	3.3	3.1	11.0	16.9
Obtain General Skills	14.3	14.6	4.4	5.4
Improve Performance in Current Job	6.6	3.8	15.4	21.5
N	91	130	91	130

NS

Table 43: Motives for taking the MBA by Age (top motive only)

	Under 35		Over 35	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Improve job opportunities	29.0	32.3	18.3	22.2
Change career	12.9	12.9	15.0	13.1
Obtain business qualification	22.6	19.4	10.0	14.1
Increase salary	0	3.2	3.3	4.0
Intellectual stimulation	12.9	16.1	23.3	19.2
Increase self confidence	3.2	0	3.3	4.0
Obtain general management skills	12.9	16.1	15.0	14.1
Improve job performance	3.2	0	8.3	5.1
N	31	31	60	99

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 44: Motives for Taking the MBA by Sector and Sex (top motive only)

	Public Sector		Private Sector	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Improve job opportunities	23.5	23.3	21.6	25.3
Change career	11.8	20.0	18.9	11.1
Obtain business qualification	7.8	13.3	24.3	16.2
Increase salary	2.0	0	2.7	5.1
Intellectual stimulation	21.6	13.3	13.5	19.2
Increase self confidence	3.9	6.7	2.7	2.0
Obtain general management skills	13.7	6.7	13.5	17.2
Improve job performance	9.8	13.3	2.7	1.0
N	51	30	37	99

NS

Table 45: Has the MBA helped your Career by Sex

	Women %	Men %
To a great extent	19.8	18.5
To some extent	61.5	66.2
It has not helped	16.5	14.6
N	91	130

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 46: Has the MBA helped your Career by Sector

	Public Sector %		Private Sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
To a great extent	13.7	26.7	24.3	16.2
To some extent	62.7	56.7	62.2	68.7
It has not helped	19.6	13.3	13.5	15.2
N	51	31	37	99

Public Sector
NS

Private Sector
NS

Table 47: Has the MBA helped your Career by Seniority

	Senior %		Middle %		Junior %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
To a great extent	24.4	23.4	12.1	16.2	15.4	13.0
To some extent	58.5	64.1	66.7	70.3	61.5	60.9
It has not helped	17.1	12.5	15.2	13.5	23.1	21.7
N	41	64	33	37	13	23

Senior
NS

Middle
NS

Junior
NS

Table 48: Has the MBA helped your Career by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
To a great extent	20.0	19.2	19.4	16.1
To some extent	58.3	64.6	74.2	74.2
It has not helped	21.7	16.2	6.5	9.7
N	60	99	31	31

Under 35
NS

Over 35
NS

APPENDIX THREE

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES: CHAPTER SIX

Table 1: Barriers experienced by Management Level

	Senior %		Middle %		Junior %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	22.0	17.2	21.3	16.2	7.7	34.7
Lack of training provision	17.0	32.9	24.2	16.2	38.5	26.0
1Insufficient education	7.3	15.6	9.1	8.1	0	8.6
Family commitments	19.5	23.5	6.1	18.9	23.1	17.3
Lack of adequate child care	14.6	1.6	9.1	5.4	23.1	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	36.6	26.6	30.3	21.6	46.2	39.1
Lack of career guidance	26.9	26.6	33.3	21.6	29.8	30.4
Prejudice of colleagues	43.9	28.1	45.5	16.2 2	15.4	17.4
Social pressures	14.6	6.3	12.1	2.7	0	0
Men's club	53.7	6.2 1	57.5	8.13	53.9	8.6
Sexual discrimination	19.5	0	24.2	0	23.1	0
No barriers	4.9	25.0	9.1	27.0	7.7	17.3
N	41	64	33	37	13	23

1: P=0.00000
2 P =0.01741

Table 2: Barriers experienced in the Public Sector

	Barriers experienced %		Largest single barrier %		
	Women	Men	Women	Men	P value
Inflexible working patterns	15.7	33.4	5.9	16.7	0.15715*
Lack of training provision	25.5	20.0	3.9	0	0.52914*
Insufficient education	9.8	0	3.3	0	0.28291*
Family commitments	19.6	20.0	3.9	6.7	0.83561*
Lack of adequate child care	11.8	0	3.3	0	0.19219*
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	27.5	26.7	11.8	16.7	0.67518*
Lack of career guidance	31.4	26.7	3.9	6.7	0.67964*
Prejudice of colleagues	47.1	23.3	11.8	13.3	0.04033
Social pressures	15.7	6.6	2.0	3.3	0.30348*
Men's club network	58.8	3.3	29.4	3.3	0.00000
Sexual discrimination	21.6	0	0	0	0.00393*
No barriers	9.8	16.7			0.36545*
N	51	30	51	30	

* cells with minimum expected frequency <5 > 20%

Table 3: Barriers experienced in the Private Sector

	Barriers experienced %		Largest single barrier %		P valu
	Women	Men	Women	Men	
Inflexible working patterns	24.3	15.1	2.7	3.0	0.3794
Lack of training provision	24.3	27.2	2.7	4.0	0.9077
Insufficient education	5.4	14.1	5.4	3.o	0.0926
Family commitments	16.2	21.3	5.4	5.1	0.7353
Lack of adequate child care	18.9	2.0	2.7	1.0	0.0012
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	45.9	27.2	16.2	13.1	0.0768
Lack of career guidance	29.7	25.3	2.7	10.1	0.1379
Prejudice of colleagues	32.4	21.2	13.5	10.1	0.3729
Social pressures	10.8	3.0	2.7	0	0.1096
Men's club network	56.7	10.2	24.3	5.1	0.0000
Sexual discrimination	21.6	0	2.7	0	0.0000
No barriers	4.1	26.3			0.0089
N	37	99	37	99	

*cells with minimum expected frequency

Table 4: Barriers experienced by Marital Status

	Married %		Single %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	21.9	19.5	11.5	16.7
Lack of training provision	18.8	25.4	19.2	25.0
Insufficient education	7.8	12.9	7.7	0
Family commitments	25.1	19.5	0	32.4
Lack of adequate child care	20.4	2.5	0	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	36.0	26.3	28.4	33.3
Lack of career guidance	31.2	26.3	23.1	16.7
Prejudice of colleagues	34.5	19.5 [1]	46.2	41.6
Social pressures	17.2	3.3	3.8	8.3
Men's club network	54.7	9.3 [2]	57.7	0
Sexual discrimination	6.5	0	15.4	0
No barriers	7.9	24.6	7.7	25.0
N	64	118	26	12

1 P=0.02710
2 P=0.00000
(Single includes separated and divorced)

Table 5: Barriers Experienced by Parenthood

	With children %		Without children %	
	women	men	women	men
Inflexible working patterns	36.3	19.7	8.6	18.6
Lack of training provision	24.2	22.1	24.2	32.6
Insufficient education	9.1	10.4	6.8	13.9
Family commitments	39.4	22.1	5.2	16.3
Lack of adequate child care	39.4	3.5	0	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	34.3	26.8	37.9	28.1
Lack of career guidance	27.2	26.7	31.0	20.9
Prejudice of colleagues	39.4	19.8	39.6	23.3
Social pressures	24.2	2.4	6.8	4.7
Men's Club network	63.7	7.0	51.7	11.7 [1]
Sexual discrimination	30.3	0	15.5	0
No barriers	3.0	25.6	10.3	23.3
N	33	86	58	43

1 P=0.00013

Table 6: Barriers Experienced by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	16.1	19.4	20.0	19.2
Lack of training provision	25.9	32.2	23.4	23.2
Insufficient education	6.5	12.9	8.3	12.1
Family Commitments	12.9	12.9	20.0	23.3
Lack of adequate child care	12.9	3.2	15.0	2.0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	45.2	19.4	31.6	29.3
Lack of career guidance	35.5	25.8	26.6	25.3
Prejudice of colleagues	35.5	19.3	41.7	22.2 [2]
Social pressures	9.7	3.2	15.0	4.0
Men's club	51.6	3.2 [1]	58.3	10.2 [3]
Sexual discrimination	22.6	0	20.0	0
No barriers	3.2	25.9	10.0	24.2
N	31	31	60	99

1 P=0.00010
2 P= 0.00290
3 P= 0.00000

Table 7: Largest Single Barrier by Management Level

	Senior %		Middle %		Junior %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	4.9	4.7	6.1	8.1	0	8.7
Lack of training provision	2.4	1.6	3.0	5.4	7.7	4.3
Insufficient education	2.4	3.1	3.0	0	0	4.3
Family commitments	2.4	6.3	0	5.4	15.4	4.3
Lack of adequate child care	2.4	0	0	2.7	0	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	17.1	14.1	12.1	8.1	23.1	21.7
Lack of career guidance	4.9	6.3	0	10.8	7.7	13.0
Prejudice of colleagues	12.2	12.5	18.2	10.8	0	8.7
Social pressures	2.4	1.6	3.0	0	0	0
Men's club network	24.4	3.1	33.3	8.1	15.4	4.3
Sexual discrimination	0	0	0	0	7.7	0
No barriers	4.9	25.0	9.1	27.0	7.7	17.3
N	41	64	33	37	13	23

Table 8: Largest Single Barrier by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	3.2	6.5	5.0	6.1
Lack of training provision	6.5	3.2	1.7	3.0
Insufficient education	6.5	0	0	3.0
Family commitments	3.2	3.2	5.0	6.1
Lack of adequate childcare	0	3.2	1.7	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	19.4	9.7	13.3	15.2
Lack of career guidance	3.2	16.1	3.3	7.1
Prejudice of colleagues	12.9	3.2	11.7	13.1
Social pressures	9.7	3.2	3.3	1.0
Men's Club network	29.0	3.2	25.0	5.1
Sexual discrimination	0	0	1.7	0
No barriers	3.2	25.9	10.0	24.2
N	31	31	60	99

Table 9: Largest Single Barrier by Marriage

	Married %		Single %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	6.3	6.8	0	0
Lack of training provision	4.7	3.4	0	0
Insufficient education	0	2.5	7.7	0
Family commitments	6.3	4.2	0	16.7
Lack of adequate child care	1.6	0.8	0	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	14.1	14.4	19.2	8.3
Lack of career guidance	3.1	10.2	3.8	0
Prejudice of colleagues	14.1	8.5	7.7	33.3
Social pressures	3.1	0.8	3.8	8.3
Men's club network	25.0	5.1	30.8	0
Sexual discrimination	1.6	0	0	0
No barriers	7.9	24.6	7.7	25.0
N	64	118	26	12

Table 10: Largest Single Barrier by Parenthood

	With Children %		Without Childre	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Inflexible working patterns	12.1	8.1	0	2.3
Lack of training provision	0	1.2	5.2	7.0
Insufficient education	0	2.3	3.4	2.3
Family commitments	12.1	4.7	0	7.0
Lack of adequate child care	3.0	1.2	0	0
Lack of personal motivation/confidence	12.1	16.3	17.2	9.3
Lack of career guidance	3.0	8.1	3.4	11.6
Prejudice of colleagues	18.2	12.8	8.6	4,.7
Social pressures	0	1.2	3.4	0
Men's club network	18.2	4.7	31.0	4.7
Sexual discrimination	3.0	0	0	0
No barriers	3.0	25.6	10.3	23.3
N	33	86	58	43

Table 11: Has the MBA helped Overcome Career Barriers by Sex

	Women %	Men %
To a large extent	11.0	9.2
To some extent	51.5	36.6
It has not helped	30.8	30.8
N	91	130

P=0.01742
Chi square: 11.62218

Table 12: Has the MBA helped Overcome Career Barriers by sector

	Public sector %		Private sector %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
To a large extent	3.9	13.3	21.6	8.1
To some extent	54.9	33.3	43.2	38.4
It has not helped	33.3	40.0	29.7	28.3
N	51	30	37	99

Private sector
P=0.02109
Chi square: 9.72152

Public Sector
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 13: Has the MBA helped Overcome Career Barriers by Marital Status

	Married %		Single %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
To a large extent	9.4	10.2	11.5	0
To some extent	51.6	35.6	53.8	41.7
It has not helped	32.8	31.4	26.9	25.0
N	64	118	26	12

Married
P=0.0510
Chi square: 8.59783
(Single includes separated and divorced)

Single
NS

Table 14: Has the MBA helped to Overcome Career Barriers by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
To a large extent	16.1	6.5	8.3	10.1
To some extent	54.8	22.6	46.7	38.4
It has not helped	22.6	38.7	35.0	28.3
N	31	31	60	99

Under 35
P=0.03412
Chi square=8.66304
(cells with minimum expected frequency <5: 25%)

Over 35
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 15: Has the MBA helped to overcome Career Barriers by Barrier Experienced (%)

	Barrier A		Barrier B		Barrier C	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
A large extent	11.8	12.0	3.0	27.3	28.6	26.7
Some extent	47.1	32.0	54.5	27.3	57.1	26.7
Not helped	41.2	13.0	27.3	36.4	14.3	40.0
N	17	25	22	33	7	15

	Barrier D		Barrier E		Barrier F	
	women	men	women	men	women	men
A large extent	12.5	11.1	15.4	33.3	12.1	11.4
Some extent	50.0	44.4	38.5	0	63.6	60.0
Not helped	37.5	44.4	38.5	66.7	21.2	25.7
N	16	27	13	3	33	35

	Barrier G		Barrier H		Barrier J	Barrier
	women	men	women	men	women	women
A large extent	14.8	15.2	5.6	10.7	11.8	2.0
Some extent	59.3	48.5	52.8	35.7	41.2	36.8
Not helped	25.9	30.0	36.1	50.0	45.1	47.4
N	27	33	36	28	51	19

Table 16: Organisation's Attitude to Women Managers

	Women %	Men %
Positive	48.3	49.2
Neutral	23.6	33.6
Negative	28.1	17.2
N	89	122

NS

Table 17: Organisation's Attitude to Women Managers by Sector

	Public sector		Private sector	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Positive	49.0	62.0	42.9	45.7
Neutral	19.6	34.5	31.4	32.6
Negative	31.4	3.4	25.7	21.7
N	51	29	35	92

Public sector
P=0.01108

Private Sector
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 18: Organisation's Attitude to Women Managers by Age

	Under 35 %		Over 35 %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Positive	48.4	50.0	48.3	48.9
Neutral	32.3	21.4	19.0	37.2
Negative	19.4	28.6	32.8	13.8
N	31	28	58	94

Under 35
NS

Over 35
P=0.00653

Table 19: Organisation's Attitude to Women Managers by Parenthood

	With children %		Without children %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Positive	54.8	52.4	44.8	42.1
Neutral	12.9	33.3	29.3	34.2
Negative	32.3	14.3	25.9	23.7
N	31	84	58	38

With Children
P=0.02671

Without children
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 20: Organisation's Attitude to Women Managers by Management Level

	Senior %		Middle %		Junior %	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Positive	59.0	51.7	39.4	48.5	30.8	38.1
Neutral	23.1	28.3	21.2	45.5	38.5	28.6
Negative	17.9	20.0	39.4	6.1	30.8	33.3
N	39	60	33	33	13	21

Senior P=0.76648
Middle P=0.00354
Junior NS

Table 21: Token and Non Token Women by Age

Age	Token %	Non token %
25-34	44.4	25.5
35-44	38.9	55.3
45-54	16.7	19.1
N	36	47

NS

Table 22: Tokens and Non Token Women by Marriage

	Token %	Non token %
Married	27.8	38.3
Single/divorced/separated	72.2	61.7
N	36	47

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 23: Token and Non Token Women by Parenthood

	Token %	Non token %
With children	27.8	38.3
Without children	72.2	61.7
N	36	47

NS

Table 24: Token and Nontoken Women by Caring Responsibility

	Token %	Non token %
Adverse effect	16.7	21.3
Beneficial effect	0	6.4
No effect	8.3	12.8
No caring responsibilities	75.0	59.6
N	36	47

NS

Table 25: Tokens and Non Token Women by Qualification

	Token %	Non token %
A' level/equivalent	5.6	2.2
Degree/equivalent	83.3	73.9
Post graduate	11.1	23.9
N	36	46

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 26: Token and Non Token Women by Academic Background

	Token %	Non token %
Arts	25.0	21.4
Science	40.6	38.1
Social Science/Humanities	31.3	38.1
Engineering	3.1	2.4
N	32	42

NS

Table 27: Token and Non Token Women by Organisational Activity

	Token	Non token
Manufacturing/Production	2.8	8.5
Leisure	2.8	2.1
Utilities	13.9	0
Financial services	11.1	6.4
Retail/Distribution/Transport	0	6.4
Marketing/Sales/Advertising	2.8	4.3
Construction/Engineering	0	0
Education/Training	19.4	29.8
Professional/Scientific/Consultancy	5.6	8.5
Other services	41.7	34.0
N	36	47

NS: Not significant

Table 28: Token and Non Token Women by Size of Organisation

Employees	Token %	Non token %
up to 50	11.1	23.4
51-1,000	33.3	27.7
over 1,000	55.6	48.9
N	36	47

NS

Table 29: Token and Non Token Women by Management Function

	Token %		Non token %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Administration	6.3	5.7	19.0	8.9
Management services	6.3	5.7	2.4	2.2
Finance/accounting	9.4	2.9	4.8	0
Education/Training	15.6	14.3	19.0	17.8
Personnel/IR	9.4	5.7	4.8	2.2
Production/Manufacturing	3.1	0	2.4	2.2
Computing/IT	15.6	14.3	2.4	0
Development/Strategic	3.1	14.3	4.8	15.6
Marketing/Sales	9.4	2.9	2.4	6.7
Purchasing/Contracting	3.1	0	4.8	4.4
Corporate affairs/PR	3.1	5.7	0	0
Management Consultancy	9.4	14.3	2.4	11.1
General Management	6.3	14.3	31.0	28.9
N	32	42	35	45

Table 30: Has the MBA helped your Career: Token and Non Token Women

	Token %	Non token %
To a great extent	25.0	19.1
To some extent	58.3	63.8
It has not helped	16.7	12.8
N	36	47

NS

Table 31: Token Women, Non Token Women and Promotions

No of promotions	Token %	Non Token %
0	33.3	39.1
1	41.7	37.0
2	19.4	19.6
3	5.6	4.3
N	36	46

NS

Table 32: Token Women, Non Token Women and Career Progress

	Token %	Non token %
Within your organisation	31.4	33.3
With another organisation	28.6	26.2
Sideways change	14.3	14.3
Set up own business	5.7	2.4
Changed career	0	7.1
No change	20.0	16.7
N	35	42

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 33: Token Women, Non Token Women and Career Prospects

	Token %	Non Token %
Good	13.9	25.5
Fair	47.2	40.4
Poor	38.9	34.0
N	36	47

NS

Table 34: Token Women, Non Token Women and Length of Time in Present Post

	Token %	Non token %
Up to 2 years	80.6	61.7
2-4 years	5.6	19.1
Over 4 years	13.9	19.1
N	36	47

NS

Table 35: Token Women, Non Token women and the Most Important Motive for taking the MBA

	Token %	Non token %
Improve job opportunities	25.0	21.3
Change career direction	16.7	12.8
Obtain business qualification	19.4	8.5
Increase salary	2.8	0
Intellectual stimulation	16.7	23.4
Increase self confidence	5.6	2.1
Obtain general skills	11.1	19.1
Improve performance in current job	2.8	8.5
N	36	47

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 36: How important are the following to you (very important only): Token and N Token Women

	Token %	Non token %
Salary and status	19.4	36.2
Job satisfaction	91.7	89.4
Working relations	61.1	63.8
Marriage and Partner	72.2	72.3
Children	33.3	42.6
N	47	36

NS

NS: Not significant

APPENDIX FOUR

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES BY REGION

Women Compared by University (where women took their MBA)

Table 1: Women by Age

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Under 35	54.5	32.6	19.2
Over 35	45.5	67.4	80.8
N	22	43	26

P=0.03510
Chi square: 6.69912

Table 2: Women by Qualifications

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
A'level/equivalent	4.5	2.4	3.8
Degree	77.3	83.3	69.2
Postgraduate	18.2	14.3	26.9
N	22	42	26

NS

Table3: Women By Academic Background

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Arts	19.0	26.3	21.7
Science	47.6	36.8	30.4
Social Science/Humanities	33.3	36.8	39.1
Engineering	0	0	8.7
N	21	38	23

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 4: Women and Marriage

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Married	63.3	73.8	73.1
Single/Separated/Divorced	36.4	26.2	26.9
N	22	42	26

NS

Table 5: Women and Parenthood

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
With children	22.7	37.2	46.2
Without children	77.3	62.8	53.8
N	22	43	26

NS

Table 6: Women and Caring Responsibilities

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Adverse Effect	9.1	18.6	34.6
Beneficial Effect	0	2.3	7.7
No Effect	13.6	16.3	3.8
No Caring Responsibilities	77.3	62.8	53.8
N	22	43	26

NS

Table 7: Women and Organisational Sector

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Public Sector	50	47.6	65.4
Private Sector	50	52.4	34.6
N	20	42	26

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 8: Women by Organisational Activity

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Manufacturing/Production	9.1	2.3	7.7
Leisure	0	0	4.7
Utilities	13.6	2.3	3.8
Financial Services	18.2	0	7.0
Retail/Distribution/Transport	0	7.0	0
Marketing/Sales/Advertising	4.5	7.0	0
Construction/Engineering	0	0	0
Education/Training	31.8	18.6	38.5
Professional/Scientific/Consultancy	0	11.6	11.5
Other Services	22.7	39.5	38.5
N	22	43	26

Table 9: Women and Size of Employing Organisation

No. of Employees	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Under 50	22.7	23.3	16.0
51-1000	13.6	30.2	44.0
Over 1,000	63.6	46.5	40.0
N	22	43	25

NS

Table 10: Women and Gender Mix (Tokens and Non Tokens)

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Token	54.5	41.0	36.4
Non Token	45.5	59.0	63.6
N	22	39	22

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 11: Management Function (after MBA)

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Administration	9.1	7.0	7.7
Management Services	4.5	4.7	3.8
Finance/Accounting	0	2.3	0
Educaton/Training	9.1	11.6	23.1
Personnel/IR	4.5	2.3	3.8
Production/Manufacturing	4.5	0	0
Computing/IT	13.6	4.7	0
Development/Srategic	18.2	11.6	11.5
Marketing/Sales	9.1	0	7.7
Purchasing/Contracting	0	4.7	0
Corporate Affairs/PR	0	0	7.7
Management Consultancy	9.1	16.3	11.5
General Management	18.2	27.9	19.2
N	22	43	26

Table 12: Management Role before and after MBA (Edinburgh and OU only)

	Edinburgh %		OU %	
	Before MBA	After MBA	Before MBA	After MBA
Senior Roles	14.3	38.1	29.3	47.6
Middle Management	28.6	33.3	31.7	31.0
Junior Management	33.3	9.5	17.1	4.8
Professional/Technical	23.8	14.3	19.5	9.5
Self Employed	0	4.8	2.4	7.1
N	21	21	41	42

Before MBA
NS

After MBA
NS

NS: Not significant

Table 13: Pay before and after MBA

	Edinburgh %		OU %		Other %	
£	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
under 25,000	77.3	40.9	45.2	16.3	84.6	46.2
26-35,000	22.7	50.0	47.6	58.1	15.4	38.5
over 36,000	0	9.1	7.1	25.6	0	15.4
N	22	22	42	43	26	26

Before MBA
P=0.00720
Chi square: 14.02907
Cells with expected frequency<5: 33.3%

After MBA
P=0.05531
9.24263

Table 14: Promotions since gaining MBA Qualification

No. of Promotions	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
0	45.5	47.6	15.4
1	18.2	38.1	53.8
2	31.8	11.9	23.1
3	4.5	2.4	7.7
N	22	42	26

NS

NS: Not significant

Table 15: Women and Career Barriers

	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %	P value
Inflexible Working Patterns	13.6	27.9	7.4	0.20981
Lack of Training Provision	27.2	25.6	19.2	0.92427
Insufficient Education	0	6.9	15.3	0.39116
Family Commitments	9.0	23.3	15.4	0.43032
Lack of Adequate Childcare	13.6	18.6	7.8	0.24800
Lack of Personal Motivation/Confidence	50.0	32.5	30.8	0.18053
Lack of Career Guidance	22.7	37.3	23.1	0.53304
Prejudice of Colleagues	31.8	39.6	46.1	0.17530
Social Pressures	9.1	11.5	16.3	0.81251
Men's Club Network	36.4	64.4	57.7	0.14860
Sexual Discrimination	13.6	23.1	23.1	0.75412
No Barriers	13.6	7.6	4.7	0.30562
N	22	42	25	

Table 16: Organisation's Attitude to Women Managers

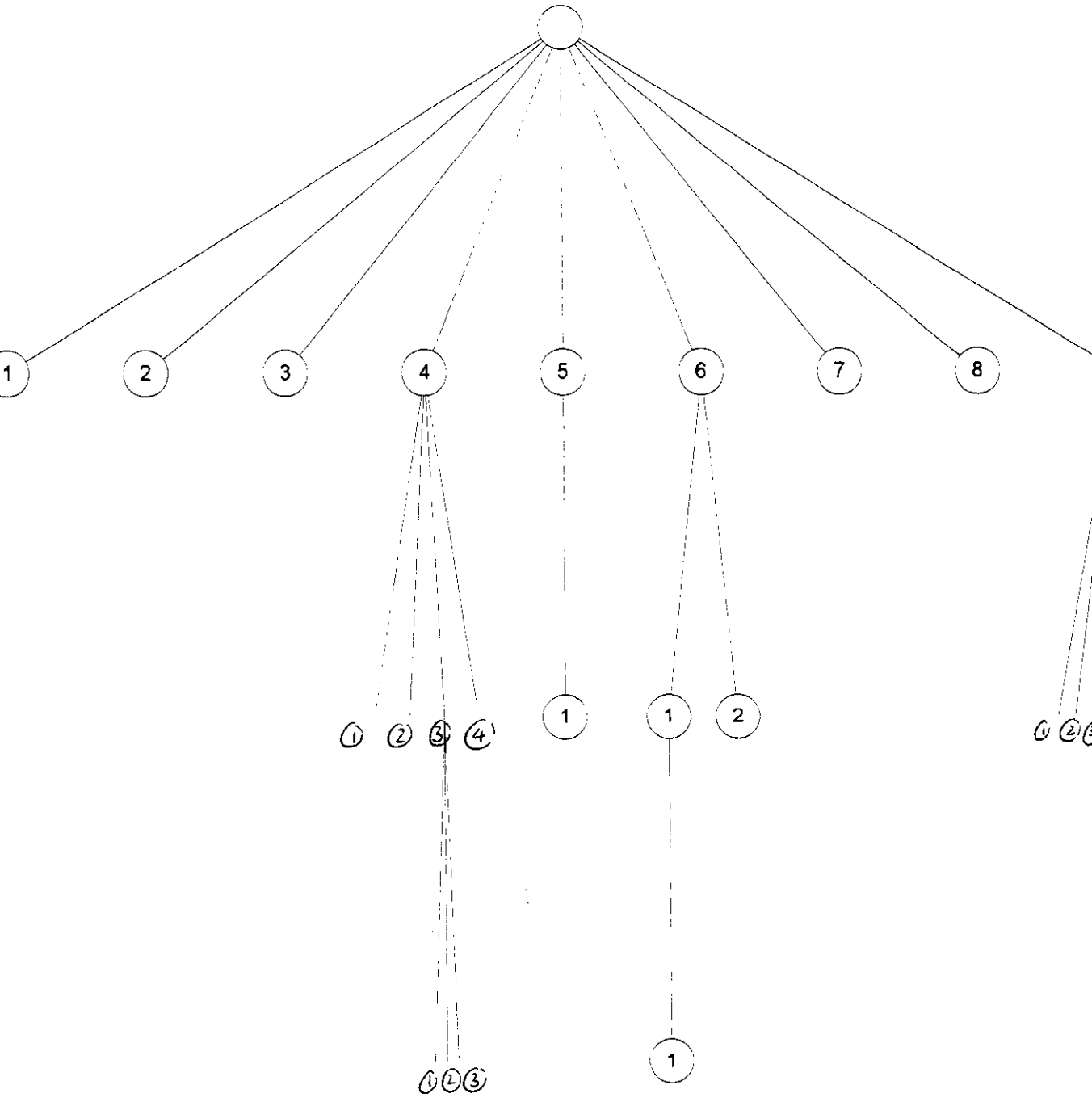
	Edinburgh %	OU %	Other %
Positive	59.1	40.5	52.0
Neutral	27.3	19.0	28.0
Negative	13.6	40.5	20.0
N	22	42	25

NS

NS: Not Significant

APPENDIX FIVE

THE NUDIST TREE


1
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NUDIST TREE: KEY

Women

1. **Present position**

2. **Previous position**

3. **Children**

4. **Talking about women**

4.1 sexism
4.2 advantages (of being a woman)
4.3 disadvantages (of being a woman)

4.1.1 men's club
4.1.2 visibility (problems of)
4.1.3 feeling separate

4.4 criticisms (of other women)

5. **Talking about men**

5.1 Gender mix

6. **Barriers**

6.1 formal

6.1.1 meetings

6.2 informal

7. **Organisational culture**

8. **Future**

Men

9.1 **Men**

9.1 **The MBA**

9.1.1 benefits
9.1.2 motives
9.1.3 problems

9.2 **Organisational culture**

9.3 **Gender mix**

9.4 **Friends**

9.5 **Working hours**

9.6 **Barriers**

9.7 **Talking about women**

9.8 **Problems as a manager**

APPENDIX SIX

PUBLICATIONS LIST

Publications

The Experience of Male and Female MBA Graduates in the Organisation, 12th EGOS Conference paper, Istanbul July 1995

Does an MBA Help Women, British Academy of Management Conference paper, Sept 1995

Is Management Education on the Right Track for Women, Women in Management Review, Vol. 10, no. 6, Nov 95

Does an MBA help Women, Gender Work and Organisation, Vol.3, no.2, April 96 (reviewed in Management Learning, Vol. 28, no. 3, Sept. 1997)

Equal Opportunities? Male and Female MBA Graduates in the UK and the role of the Organisation in Creating Career Barriers, Contemporary Issues in Human Resource Management, ed Professor Beardwell, pp279-290 p ESKA Paris 1996

Women and the MBA, IFSAM Conference paper, Paris July 1996

Have Times Changed? Career Barriers and the Token Woman Manager, British Journal of Management, Vol. 8, April 1997 pp. S121-9

Rationalisation, Flexibility and the Impact of Presenteeism on the Working Lives of Senior Managers, EGOS Conference, Budapest, July 1997.

Women and the MBA: the Labour Market Position and Barriers Experienced by Male and Female MBA Graduates, Centre for Equality Research in Business, Research Paper No1 January 1997

Organisational Restructuring and Presenteeism: The Impact of Long Hours on the Working Lives of Managers in the UK, paper given to the Employment Research Unit Conference, Cardiff. Sept 1997

Presenteeism, Power and Organisational Change: Long Hours as a Career Barrier and the Impact on the Working Lives of Women Managers, refereed paper given to British Academy of Management Conference, Sept 1977 (awarded prize for best paper and under editorial review for 1997 special issue of British Journal of Management).

APPENDIX SEVEN

INTERVIEW GUIDE/LIST OF QUESTIONS

Interview Guide/List of Questions

(Follow-up or interim questions are not included as these varied according to responses given. The following therefore constitute 'core' questions only)

Present Employment

What is the nature of your work here/job description

Who do you report to

How has your career progressed within this/within your previous organisation

The MBA

What motivated you to do an MBA

What were the main problems you encountered doing the course

How has the MBA helped you/what have been the main benefits

What impact has the MBA had on working relations eg reaction of colleagues and line managers to new MBA status

The Organisation

What is the gender mix of your organisation at your own/lower/higher levels

How does this (gender mix) affect your work/working relations/ how you work

How would describe the culture of this organisation

Do you have friends here/are there strong networks/supportive relationships

How would you describe your relationship with other senior managers/more senior managers/ less senior personnel

How are decisions made/problems solved in the organisation

Career Barriers

How do women progress in the organisation

What sort of barriers do you face/have you faced in your career

What strategies do you adopt/have you adopted to overcome career barriers

What problems do you face or have you faced as a manager

What would you say were your main pressures as a manager

What about the context of the meeting: are there ways in which you find or have found meetings problematic or difficult

What do you hope to be doing in five years time

Are there any other issues you wish to discuss

APPENDIX EIGHT

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Name: Maggie
Organisation: Travel Company
Level: Senior manager
Family: unmarried no kids

Nudist Tree referen

(Can you tell me about your job here)

I am the group international technology manager for First Choice. First Choice comprises of a number of operating companies. We turn over as a group about a billion a year and technology is a group function so I have responsibility across the group. The vice-president of technology in Canada reports to me. When I say technology I mean everything from developing new systems, package systems, personal computers, telephone exchanges, mobile phones - the lot. Systems that are out at a resort, locations. I report directly to the chief executive group. I've been here slightly less than a year . Before I was IT director of CT Bounds who are commercial chartered company in the City

1- Present Positio

(Was this a promotion)

Um it's a bigger job in a smaller organisation. I was on the periphery like my chap in Canada - I was sort of in that role before where I had a boss in New York. This is a smaller organisation but I do a bigger job in it so - so in terms of a promotion - yes

1- Present / previou
2. positio

(What made you decide to do an MBA)

9.1 The MBA

I finished my MBA in 93 with the OU. I loved it - because I have to say I was a sceptic. My brother in law was made redundant some years ago and decided to use his redundancy money to fund a year in Cranfield and at the time I thought Gosh all this academic stuff what nonsense and it actually did him rather good at a personal level he got a career out of it. But I was still very sceptical and then when I started the whole process I started to realise that MBAs were not becoming such a differentiator they were almost becoming a necessity and I could see they were going to become more and more popular and that if you didn't have one you wouldn't even get through the door. I thought well, you can't really fight this - you've got to get on with it. And at the time I thought well if you are going to do this do it properly and I phoned Harvard and I said How much (laugh). So I soon changed my mind on that one! I did consider briefly how about doing this full time but I have to say I didn't have the confidence to take a year out and being single. I would have had to have borrowed money and I didn't have the confidence in the qualification or myself. Then I thought of the two year options and that seemed the worst of all worlds because you've just got to put your life on hold because if you are trying to hold down a job and

9.1.2. motive (necessity)

9.1.2 motive (entry)

mode

9.1. The MBA

do this in two years there's just absolutely no time for anything else. I took the pretty route because I had to pre qualify so I had to do the Certificate in Management and the Diploma in Management first which is probably no bad thing and I think it took me about 4 to 5 years.

The initial idea came from the training manager for the company I was working with. I hadn't really considered the OU And then I found out more about it and I thought well in practical terms this is the only way I am actually going to be able to do it and don't think 5 years out just think this year. And that was one of the good things. There were small bites at it

(How has the MBA helped you)

9.11 Benefits (interne

It um I wouldn't have got the interview for this job without the qualification because of the profile of the management team in this organisation.

It was very unusual in this organisation back in 93 - in a turnaround situation and the and the whole of the board in the executive that I knew and there was a deliberate policy to recruit younger people who were very well qualified from outside the industry and without the MBA my CV just would not have passed muster

9.11 Benefits (promotion

(What about actually doing the job?)

Well when I first started doing the course I thought God this will be boring. The only thing I'll be interested in is the qualification. The content will be entirely irrelevant, esoteric and boring. But it helps me enormously. Not just in the body of substance - Oh I understand a bit more about finance and a bit more about marketing - it helps my understanding and it helps my confidence. I know a little bit more about what some of the issues are so I feel more confident having a conversation with someone

9.11 Benefits (knowledge (und

(confidence)

(confidence (conv

Very much about understanding the language and so on and I think that it's more of a women's issue because we tend to be a little less cocky and it makes you more prepared to ask what might appear dumb questions.

(language)

(credibility)

I think the confidence thing is a big issue. And I think it helps - I do think and I'm not a great feminist or anything - I'm not in favour of positive discrimination or any of those things but I do believe that your qualification gives you a better profile among your male colleagues - that it shouldn't be so but it is. That if you've got the qualification it still does give you respect.

(confidence)

(profile, credibility

(Have you come a cross any prejudice towards your MBA)

9.1.3 problems (threatene

Possibly threatened yes. But it did me no harm because rather than starting off with people saying oh yes there's that dozy woman at least they knew you couldn't be entirely stupid. So I think it helped in terms of credibility. It helps the initial attitude that you meet day one

9.1.1. Benefit (credibilit